





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2020 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

KOINONIA

Princeton Theological Seminary
Graduate Forum

Volume X.1

Spring 1998

Volume X.1 • SPRING 1998

KOINONIA

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	ix
Divine Power and Love: An Evangelical Process Proposal THOMAS JAY OORD	1
Questions of Honor in the Book of Judges SHANE KIRKPATRICK	19
Han and the Context of Theology for Korean North American Women GRACE JI-SUN KIM	41
Beyond Narrative Theology: John Milbank and Gerhard Loughlin as the Non-Identical Repetition of Hans Frei ALEX HAWKINS	61
Through a Mirror Dimly: Culture and Theology According to Osadolor Imasogie J.M. GIVENS, JR.	88

BOOK REVIEWS

Concordancia de palabras ugaríticas en morfología desplegada.

By Jesús-Luis Cunchillos and Juan-Pablo Vita.

BRENT A. STRAWN

107

Hans Frei and Karl Barth: Different Ways of Reading Scripture.

By David E. Demson.

JOHN DAVID JAEGER

110

Heretics: The Other Side of Early Christianity.

By Gerd Lüdemann. Translated by John Bowden.

HORACE SIX-MEANS

113

Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation: A Reader on

Theology and Christian Education. Edited by Jeff Astley,

Leslie J Francis, and Colin Crowder.

LISA E. HESS

115

Piety and Power: Muslims and Christians in West Africa.

By Lammin Sanneh.

TOKUNBO ADELEKAN

118

The Papacy and the People of God. Edited by Gary MacEoin.

MARIANNE M. DELAPORTE

122

Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, The Father of Hate Radio. By

Donald Warren.

CLIFF DOERKSEN

125

Feminization of the Clergy in America: Occupational and

Organizational Perspectives. By Paula D. Nesbitt.

JENNIFER M. REECE

127

Biblical Theology: Problems and Perspectives In Honor of J.

Christiaan Beker. Edited by Steven J. Kraftchick, Charles D.

Myers, and Ben C. Ollenburger.

MATTHEW L. SKINNER

130

Cadences of Home: Preaching among Exiles.

By Walter Brueggemann.

JAMES K. MEAD

133

The Missionary Movement in American Catholic History.

By Angelyn Dries, O.S.F.

HARUKO NAWATA WARD

136

*American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought
and Practice.* By Dana L. Robert.

MARY SCHALLER BLAUFUSS

139

Families in Ancient Israel. Edited by Leo Perdue.

BETH LANEEL TANNER

142

*Pragmatic Theology: Negotiating the Intersections of an American
Philosophy of Religion and Public Theology.*

By Victor Anderson.

TARRIS D. ROSELL

144

A Companion to Philosophy of Religion, Edited by Philip L.
Quinn and Charles Taliaferro.

TOMÁŠ HANČIL

147

CONTRIBUTORS

150

EDITORIAL

The task of introducing the open issue of *Koinonia* seems especially daunting this time around, as the five essays gathered here range from a proposal bringing together evangelical and process theologies to a description of the complex context in which Korean immigrant women in North America strive to find their theological voice. If there is a common thread binding the essays in this issue into a collection, it is the process of theologizing itself. Each essay lifts up a particular aspect of this process for our examination and review. Though the authors write from different disciplines and out of specific contexts, their reflections can and do enrich the perspectives of all of us who take the time to read what they have offered.

Thomas Jay Oord introduces this issue with his search for a way of adequately describing divine love and power in a world marred by holocausts and dictators, yet acquainted as well with acts of sacrifice and saintliness. Surely this must be the task of all theologizing today. Oord's search has led him to propose constructing a common ground between the evangelical and process theological traditions. This common ground with its understanding of God as both powerful and loving, Oord believes, is faithful to the broad witness of Scripture and in harmony with much of evangelical piety.

At the outset of his essay on questions of honor in the book of Judges, Shane Kirkpatrick reminds us of the great gulf of time and space that separate us from the world of the Hebrew scriptures. In order to understand that world, and the narratives emerging out of that world, with more clarity, Kirkpatrick turns to models of social interaction proposed by anthropologists in their studies of contemporary cultures. Though the honor or disgrace Ephraim in two short passages out of the Deuteronomistic History do not seem to have any lasting theological significance, Kirkpatrick shows how the progressive disintegration of Ephraim's honor reflects the book of Judges view of the history of Israel. More importantly, Kirkpatrick points out how clearer understanding of human social patterns in biblical texts can lead us to a greater understanding of depictions of human—divine interaction in Scripture.

Grace Ji-Sun Kim examines a particular context for doing theology. She explores the *han*, the accumulated oppression, with which Korean immigrant women in North America live. She points out how these women are caught between the conflicting values of Korean Confucianism, which encourages

women to be submissive and to define themselves through their relationship to others, and the individualism of North American society. The church often plays a contradictory role in the lives of these women, serving on one hand as a vehicle for Americanization and on the other hand preserving traditional culture in part by restricting women's roles. For these women, the first step in constructing their own theology must be the release of their *han* as they strive to maintain a bicultural existence and find an understanding of Jesus that is appropriate for their context.

The discussion of narrative theology presented by Alex Hawkins raises the question of the subject of theology. Hawkins sees the whole of Hans Frei's work as aimed at opposing the encroachment of the modern, self-present subject into theology. Though Frei argues for a contingent and embodied agency, his description of reading seems to eliminate the subject completely, leaving him no way to adequately account for the church's practice of reading Scripture. Theologians Loughlin and Milbank, according to Hawkins, share Frei's opposition to the modern subject, yet through their work on the mutual construction of text and reader, posit the corporate subjectivity of the church.

The relationship of theology and culture is the topic of J. M. Givens article in which he introduces us to the thought of a Baptist theologian from Nigeria, Osadolor Imasogie. As a leader in a West African church that had been founded by missionaries from the West, Imasogie has sought an authentically African form of Christianity. Each person can only come to Christ from within the context of his or her own culture; therefore theology must become incarnated within each culture so as to speak to the entire human being within each cultural context. Only such a contextualized theology can speak to the existential needs of Nigerians and make explicit the redeeming work of Christ within the culture.

As always, the publication of *Koinonia* is a collective effort and my thanks go to the members of the editorial board for their hard work in bringing this issue to press. As a board we are excited to see more and more submissions coming our way, an indication, we hope, that by providing this arena for academic expression we are serving the needs of doctoral students in religious and theological studies. We are also excited by the fact that *Koinonia* is now appearing on the shelves of more libraries throughout North America.

— KARLA ANN KOLL
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Divine Power and Love

An Evangelical Process Proposal

THOMAS JAY OORD

DIALOGUE HAS INCREASED RECENTLY BETWEEN TWO THEOLOGICAL traditions traditionally held to be opponents: process theology and evangelical theology. The two traditions have found much common ground in their mutual emphasis upon divine love and love's implications for other aspects of theological construction. However, the issue of divine power lies at the heart of many differences between the two. This essay attempts to offer common ground upon which both traditions can stand in their affirmation of divine power and love.

BACKGROUND ISSUES CONCERNING DIVINE POWER

Process thought offers a conception of divine power that claims that God does not have the ability to control any actual occurrence completely. Instead, God's power is exclusively persuasive. Evangelicals generally characterize the God described by process thought as a wimp, unworthy of worship. When Whitehead writes, "The power of God is the worship He inspires" (1925:192), many evangelicals assume that this could not possibly be the God described in Scripture: the God who exerts power even on those who refuse to worship Him.

The charge that the process God is a wimp arises out of Whitehead's assertion that the Galilean origin of Christianity does not depend on the premise that God is a ruling Caesar (1978:343). Whitehead laments, however, that interwoven with Christian theology the unfortunate concept of a divine despot of a slavish universe has survived (1968:26). His conviction is that, "The divine element in the world is to be conceived as a persuasive agency and not as a coercive agency" (1968:166). Following Whitehead's lead, process theologians and philosophers often utilize the language of coercion and persuasion in their attempt to deny that God forces creatures to succumb to the divine will.

Whitehead notes that the idea of persuasive love was not original to Jesus; Plato identified it hundreds of years earlier. He praises Plato's insight: "This doctrine should be looked upon as one of the greatest intellectual discoveries in the history of religion" (1968:166). The greatness of Jesus is that in him Plato's insight into the nature of divine love as persuasive was actualized in a concrete figure. What Plato had speculated, Jesus incarnated. Jesus is the most comprehensive and complete revelation of the character and mode of agency of God in the world.

The underlying basis for Whitehead's assertion that God's power is persuasive resides, at least in part, in his metaphysical notion that God does not possess all power in the universe. Creatures inherently have some power of their own. Because of this, God's influence is never totally—unilaterally—determinative. An entity "derives from God its basic conceptual aim, relevant to its actual world, yet with indeterminations awaiting its decisions," asserts Whitehead (1978:224). Decisions by entities are made in their limited power with regard to limited possibilities, but autonomous power is exerted as each entity resolves its constitution.

God does, however, exert influence upon *all* actual entities. God's power is that of persuasive love, that has guided the world into its present state while working with it for the fulfillment of an ever new creative order of life. Thus, for process theologians, one of God's primary functions is that of the cosmic Orderer who offers an initial aim to each individual of creation. This aim includes the specific possibilities for each individual in each moment, and these possibilities are graded as to their relevance.

The process discussion of the role and extent of God's power leads many to wonder in what sense this God is omnipotent. To answer such a question, some preliminary issues must first be addressed.

Some Christian philosophers and theologians have asserted that divine omnipotence should be identical to divine omnicausality. For instance, Martin Luther writes: "By the omnipotent God... I do not mean the potentiality by which he could do many things which he does not, but the active power by which he potently works all in all.... This omnipotence and foreknowledge of God, I say, completely abolish the dogma of free choice" (1955–76:33:189). A few Christian philosophers and theologians have even suggested that God's omnipotence entails the power to do that which is illogical, e.g., the power to make round squares. Rene Descartes, for one, suggested this.

However, most religious thinkers have offered more nuanced formulations of divine omnipotence. Some have followed the example set by Augus-

tine by both affirming that nothing happens that is contrary to God's will and foreknowledge while also claiming that humans have a degree of power for free acts. This form of compatibilism affirms that God's complete foreknowledge is compatible with human freedom. In other words, it is logically possible that humans are free and responsible for their actions even though these actions are entirely (divine or otherwise) determined by another.

Following the precedent set by Augustine, both Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin distinguish between primary causation which is divine and secondary causation by lower "free" agents. Calvin writes: "All events are governed by God's secret plan; nothing happens except what is knowingly and willfully decreed by God" (1949:222). This version of omnipotence does not find it justifiable to talk about humans as possessing power of their own if what we mean by "power" includes a degree of self-determination that cannot be overridden by the God who foreknows all.

These and other theologians pay a high price when claiming that divine omnipotence means that God possesses absolute sovereignty. Absolute sovereignty inevitably ends in some form of determinism and supports a conception of power inconsistent with the main thrust of the Biblical witness as to how God and individuals interact. Determinism further implies that an individual's sinful act is, at least indirectly, the work of God. Lack of response-ability undermines responsibility. In sum, genuine freedom is impossible in a world run by an absolute Sovereign who, either directly or indirectly, determines all things. Numerous objections to this conception of omnipotence have been offered and this is not the time to rehearse them. It must suffice to say that they are of little value to an attempt to find common ground upon which process and evangelical theologies can stand and also maintain the centrality of divine love.

One option for conceiving divine power, particularly popular in the Arminian, Wesleyan, Holiness, or Charismatic traditions of evangelicalism, is called "free-will theism" or "bestowalism."¹ Although conceptions of classic free-will theism vary, the label generally means that God bestowed freedom to individuals at creation. This omnipotent God *could* withdraw or override creaturely powers but has chosen to bestow power to creatures and

1. For a full-scale critique of process conceptions of power by a free-will theist see, in addition to his various published articles on the subject of free-will theism, David Basinger, 1988.

regulate divine power in conformity to divine love. The most powerful versions of classic free-will theism deny that God completely knows the unactualized future and insist that the future is open for both humans and God.² Among other things, classic free-will theism allows evangelicals to identify miracles as the activity of a God who, having created the world *ex nihilo*, is able to interrupt the normal causal sequences now and then.

It should be pointed out that classic free-will theists can generally agree with Whitehead's notion that God does not possess all power. God's persuasive power is the primary mode of divine activity. Many classic free-will theists could agree with Whitehead when he recognizes that an obvious feature of Jesus' life is his service to and suffering with, rather than power over, humans.

However, when asked if God's omnipotence includes the *possibility* to control completely anyone or any situation (e.g., in creation, incarnation, or eschaton), evangelicals in this tradition are likely to indicate that omnipotence *does* include this possibility. That which was given by God can be taken away or at least overridden. This version of omnipotence includes the divine ability to determine unilaterally the decisions of others—if God should decide. *The Openness of God* authors generally reflect the free-will conception of the multidimensional power possessed by God:

[God] is endlessly resourceful and competent in working toward his ultimate goals. Sometimes God alone decides how to accomplish these goals. On other occasions, God works with human decisions, adapting his own plans to fit the changing situation. God does not control everything that happens. Rather, he is open to receiving input from his creatures. In loving dialogue, God invites us to participate with him to bring the future into being (1994:7).

These words demonstrate the belief that God both coerces ("God works alone") and persuades ("God invites us to participate"). Clark Pinnock further argues that, "To reduce God's power to persuasion would make God too passive — it would be an overreaction against almightiness" (1994:116).

2. The best presentation of this view, from a decidedly Biblical standpoint, is a collection of essays by Clark Pinnock, Richard Rice, William Hasker, and David Basinger entitled *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994).

Unfortunately, despite its intentions otherwise, classic free-will theism's vessel ultimately suffers the same fate as other vessels carrying theories of divine power: it crashes upon "the problem of evil" rock. The classic free-will argument amounts to either denying the existence of genuine evil or denying that God is fully loving. Because this God possesses unilaterally determinative power but fails to intercede in the face of horror (holocausts, rapes, bombings, genocide, murders, etc.), we are left to assume that these horrors are not genuinely evil. A "genuinely evil" event is that event, all things considered, without which the world would have been better (Griffin 1976:22). These horrors are not genuinely evil because they either serve as necessary elements for character building (soul-making) or are less important than the value of allowing the perpetrators of evil to express unrestrained freedom. If they are genuinely evil, God must not care deeply enough about these tragedies of existence to prevent them. And if God doesn't care, God isn't love.

Only the God who wants what is best, but whose persuasive call for the best can be ignored, is the God not culpable for the world's evil. Does this mean that the only plausible conception of divine power is the process one, that God's activity is entirely persuasive?

Daniel Day Williams, who was undoubtedly influenced in this regard by Reinhold Niebuhr during the years they taught together at Union Theological Seminary, was one process theologian who believed God is able to use coercion occasionally. "We see that the causality operative in love does not exclude coercion," wrote Williams. "The issue here is ethical as well as metaphysical. In love we impose conditions upon one another both intentionally and unintentionally" (1968:119). He agreed with Niebuhr that coercion is necessary, especially in the political realm, to increase the common good (1949:87–93). In his advocacy of coercive love, however, Williams denied Niebuhr's claim that Christian love is disinterested, transcendent, and therefore unable to get its hands dirty in the power struggles of life.³ He summarized his position in opposition to Niebuhr:

What we have established... is that the exercise of power in history, the expression of interests, vitalities, and wills which belong to us as human beings, and even the participation in the inevitable conflict of these

3. Niebuhr's unwillingness to identify love with war, is illustrated when he writes: "The social struggle involves a violation of the pure ethic of love, not only in the assertion of rights, but in the inevitable use of coercion" (1976: 35).

interests and vitalities, are not in contradiction to the real human good which is the earthly content of our life in the love of God (1949:93).

Williams uses the parent-child relationship to show that coercion can be used as a means of love. A parent's use of persuasive power should be the first option considered, but coercive power may sometimes be necessary to bring about what is the child's ultimate good. Thus, both Williams and Niebuhr could advocate the use of coercion by one nation upon another, although Niebuhr could not see any reason to call this intervention truly loving.⁴

Part of Williams's reasoning about divine influence is powered by this use of analogy. Because creatures coerce and because it would be odd to attribute more power to a temporary creature than to the everlasting God, God must also coerce. He is quick to note that God uses coercion to achieve loving goals because any divine purpose is motivated by perfect love.

Williams is not the only process thinker to advocate coercion. No less a process philosopher than Charles Hartshorne also recognized the validity of coercive love in his objection to a type of pacifism. He writes: "Faith in love is not belief in a special kind of magic whereby refusal to use violence against violence automatically results in the least harm, still less in appeasing the violent" (1941:xvii). In fact, being ethical sometimes means injuring another because "the interests of others may require such injury" (31). However, while Williams appears to espouse a notion of divine power nearly identical to the one advocated by classic free-will theism in which coercion *can* be identified with unilateral determination, Hartshorne does not. It should be noted that both recognize that the use of force may be the most loving option available in a given situation.

This helps us raise a crucial question, Must force be equated with the ability to coerce or determine unilaterally the actions of another? I assert that force need *not* be understood in this way. In other words, God and individuals can be said to use force lovingly without unilaterally determining the becoming of another. It is difficult to be a prisoner in a cell and not acknowledge that humans have the ability to use force. It is also difficult to read Scripture and not acknowledge that the writers record God as having an analogous power. A faithful rendering of the power of God expressed in Scripture

4. Niebuhr thought, for instance, that coercion should be used against Japan because of its invasion of China (1932:415).

is vital for a conception of divine power if theologians in either camp, but especially evangelicals, are to be satisfied.

But can a conception of divine power account for the main thrust of the Biblical record and our own experience without also placing into jeopardy helpful possibilities for understanding the creation of the world and for avoiding a crash upon the problem of evil rocks? I believe so. In the following pages, I hope to affirm a basic Whiteheadian formulation of God's power similar to the one for which David Ray Griffin eloquently argues,⁵ while also attributing more power to God—something classic free-will evangelicals such as David Basinger argue is necessary.⁶

PERSUADING, COMPELLING, AND INDIRECT PHYSICAL FORCE WITHOUT UNILATERAL DETERMINATION

My own conception of God's omnipotence is based upon the premise that an evangelical process theology of love must talk about God's power as (1) persuasive, (2) as what I call "compelling," and (3) as capable of indirect physical force without attributing to God the capacity to determine events unilaterally. Distinguishing between each of these kinds and degrees of power is crucial for my argument.

Many problems arising in the contemporary discussion of divine power result from terminological disagreements.⁷ Some use the terms "persuasion" and "coercion" in the metaphysical sense, whereby coercion is equated with unilateral determination and persuasion is any type of power that cannot override the self-determination of individuals (Griffin 1991:102–8). Others use these terms in their psychological or what I call "personally interactive"

5. I am deeply indebted to David Griffin's work on process theodicy especially his elucidation of the subtle nuances and implications of Whitehead's conception of Divine power. Griffin's books on theodicy (*God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976] and *Evil Revisited: Responses and Recon-siderations* [Albany, NY: SUNY, 1991]) are very helpful in this respect.

6. I hope to be answering the question David Basinger asks indirectly in his essay ("Divine Persuasion: Could the Process God do More?" *Journal of Religion* 6, no. 3 [July 1984], 332–47) without agreeing with him that a core belief of evangelicals is that "God *can* unilaterally intervene in worldly affairs" ("Process-Relational Christian Soteriology: A Response to Wheeler," *Process Studies* 18/2 [Fall 1989], 117).

7. For examples of the problems that arise when individuals understand these terms differently see Griffin 1991.

sense, whereby persuasion and coercion are different in degree but not in kind. When using persuasive and coercive power in this personally interactive sense, the one upon whom force is exerted always retains a degree of self-determination; but, depending upon the attractiveness of the options involved, one may feel as though they are either persuaded or coerced. In the metaphysical sense, coercion and persuasion have an absolute difference; in the personally interactive sense, their difference is relative.

In order to explain the conceptions of divine power for which I argue, it is critical that I give precise definitions to the terms I am using. By the capacity for unilateral determination, I mean the ability of one individual to control *entirely* an action of another. Process thought has argued that all actual entities are determined by two things: (1) the past, which includes the actions of others (both divine and non-divine) and the possibilities offered by God, and (2) the self-determination of the actual entity in response to the past. Unilateral determinism would occur if God, or any individual for that matter, entirely controlled the activity of the actual entity such that no self-determination could occur. That Hartshorne denied God could entirely control the activity of an actual entity and must have used “coercion” in its personally interactive sense is reflected in his words, “God’s influence upon others is not decisive to the last degree of determination” (1951:527). Whatever we come to mean by the power to persuade, compel, or exert indirect physical force, it does not entail absolute sovereignty in the sense of God’s ability to determine unilaterally.

What I mean by “persuasive” power is the power that attracts or lures another to make a specific choice among options of similar attractiveness. For instance, we say we have been persuaded to attend a certain college after examining the pros and cons for attending that school. We are persuaded to attend it instead of others that are almost as attractive. Conceiving God’s activity as loving is rather easy if it is persuasive in this sense, because this power is not controlling.

What I call “compelling” power, as opposed to persuasive, is the power exerted upon another whereby one option is a far more attractive when compared to other options. Instances of compelling power are most apparent in the interaction between persons. In its positive forms, compelling power can be observed when a man falls head-over-heels in love with a woman. This man might even say he feels powerless to resist his lover’s charm and beauty. He feels compelled because the woman is by far the most attractive option he sees in his life; but he is not unilaterally determined because other options

are open to him, however remote the possibility might be that he would choose them. In its negative forms, compelling power is exerted when a robber places a gun to a store-clerk's head and says, "Give me your money!" Although the clerk might conclude that she has no other option but to fork over the cash, other options are available. She could decide to do nothing and risk being shot because of that decision. She feels compelled to hand over the money, however, because giving the money to the thief is by far the most attractive option.

The attempt to compel another is often exerted in the interaction between people. As we have just seen, this attempt can take the form of a threat, but it can also take the form of a promise. When an individual attempts to compel another to act in a certain way that individual might say, "If you *X*, then I will *Y*"; or "If you do not *X*, then I will *Y*." A variety of promises and threats can be inserted in the place of *X* and *Y*.

A basic assertion in this work is that God exerts compelling power. Although the compelling force exercised by finite creatures may be unloving, God's compelling power is always based upon genuine love and the concern to achieve what is best given what is possible. The biblical authors often describe God's activity as compelling. Perhaps the most common form of God's compelling power is the covenant. Listen to an instance: "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land... But if you turn aside... and go and serve other gods... then I will pluck you up out of the land that I have given you" (2 Chr 7:14–20).

Some may object that compelling others through the use of covenant or threat is based upon the ability of the one issuing those demands to exercise either unilateral determination or direct physical force. I do not believe this to be so. This objection leads to the third way in which God exercises power: *indirect* physical force.

To discuss this aspect of power, let us return to the passage in 2 Chronicles just cited. In this passage, does divine "plucking" require that God have the capacity for unilateral determination or direct physical force? Does "plucking" mean that God's hand will appear out of the sky to scoop up the Israelites and transport them to some far-off land? The answer to both of these questions is No.

I define God's indirect physical force as God's ability to persuade or compel complex individuals with local physical bodies to exert direct physical

force upon others. This means that God has the capacity to exercise indirect physical force upon another individual without possessing a physical body consisting of hands, feet, claws, etc. In understanding that God's use of indirect physical force occurs when God persuades or compels non-divine individuals to act, we understand how God can "pluck."

The preceding has presupposed that God possesses the power neither to determine unilaterally nor to exert direct physical force upon individuals *as* aggregates in the same way that many finite individuals can.⁸ Why should we assume that this second supposition—that God cannot exert direct physical force like finite individuals—be made? David Ray Griffin makes a helpful clarification to pave the way in understanding why it is that God cannot exert direct physical force on others in the same manner as finite physical individuals. Griffin claims that the omnipresent and universally influencing God of the Bible does not have a localized body. "There is no localized divine body between the divine soul and us with which God could manipulate our bodies," he writes (1991:104). God cannot exert direct physical force with a divine body because God's body is not one finite, localized agent among others. Many finite, local agents do have such a body; the infinite, universal Agent does not. God's constant, direct influence is analogous to what it might be like for a mind to influence another mind without mediating bodies present between them. This conception of God also coincides with the time-honored conception of God as the soul of the universe.

Griffin's clarification of the difference between humans and God coincides with a declaration of the constitution of God found in Scripture. In John 4:24, we are told that "God is spirit." Whatever subtleties of the meaning of spirit are here, this declaration of God's composition allows us to give Biblical support for the claim that God does not have a localized physical body with which to exert direct physical force. This does not mean that God, as spirit, has no physicality; it only means that the physicality of the Spirit is something very different from the physicality that can be observed under the scientist's microscope. Just as a human mind possesses a physical dimension that cannot be observed although it exerts influence upon bodily members,

8. By "aggregate" I mean a collection of actualities that have no dominant member. Aggregates have no self-determination *as* aggregates. Consequently, God does not exert influence upon aggregates as such but only upon those occasions that constitute an aggregational society.

so God, as spirit, possesses an apparently undetectable physicality that exerts influence upon all without unilaterally determining any.

Restating the definition of God's indirect physical force before continuing might be helpful. This aspect of God's power is the ability to influence local physical bodies by persuading other local, physical bodies to exercise physical force. This conception of divine power is not to be identified with unilateral determination.

Illustrations of God's indirect physical force occur throughout Scripture. They come in the form of God calling individuals, groups, or nations to exercise physical force upon others. Such force may include the laying on of hands for healing, the feeding of the hungry, the giving of a holy kiss. It might also include excluding one from the church (1 Cor 5:1–5), a violent cleansing of the temple (Mt 21:12,13), opposition to unjust and oppressive governments or clergy, and even the use of the sword (Mt 10:34).

Biblical writers often claim that God persuaded Israel to act as God's "hands" and "feet." To believe this, however, does not also require belief that God commanded the Israelites to exercise all the various destructive actions described in Scripture. Just as individuals and groups misinterpret the call of God today, the Israelites surely did so in the past. On the other hand, we must remember that God's perfect love is the offering of what is best, given the circumstances. Drastic times may call for drastic measures, and the best possible measures—given the times—may be something other than gentle. Sometimes our choices are between bad and worse; God's call, however, is always a perfectly loving call for the best given the circumstances.

Let me offer an example of what God's indirect physical force might have looked like today. Theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer was involved in a failed attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Apparently, Bonhoeffer felt called by God to kill Hitler in hopes of ending the suffering, cruelty, tragedy, and chaos of World War II. Hitler had ordered the death of millions of Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, and dissenters in concentration camps. He was responsible for the deaths of millions more in the war. His order to exterminate so many is a powerful human example of both compelling and indirect physical force of the most evil, ungodly kind.

With all this evil, isn't it natural for us to wonder why *God* didn't kill Hitler? I would assert that the murder of Hitler could have been one of the most loving acts in all of history, let alone the 20th century. Because God is spirit, not a localized agent with a physical body, and also because God is not

capable of unilateral determination, the execution of Hitler was impossible for God acting alone.

The capacity for indirect physical force, by calling upon others, *was* available for God. Because of this possibility, I believe God persuaded Bonhoeffer and friends to attempt the loving task of assassinating Hitler. God could not accomplish this goal without first persuading God's "hands" and "feet": Bonhoeffer and friends. This is God's power at its loving best. This merciful attempt was unfortunately thwarted by others, who did not do their part in responding to God's call. Thus, I believe, those who stopped the assassination attempt were rejecting the divine will (the fact that God's intentions can be thwarted by human opposition is also attested to in Scripture). This illustration of Bonhoeffer and Hitler, not to mention the war and Holocaust, further illustrates that even God's attempt to exercise indirect physical force can be blocked because God is unable to determine unilaterally the actions of others.

In my assertion that God exercises compelling power and indirect physical force, I am not suggesting that God's activity is anything less than perfectly loving. God's activity is aimed at bringing about the greatest harmony, beauty, and whatever is best given each situation. For instance, when God enters into a covenant, which may be a form of compelling power, that covenant entails various negative consequences if broken. Those consequences are negative precisely because the consequences of keeping the covenant are positive. The very reason God makes a covenant is to avail those who share in that covenant some positive effect. Or, when God uses indirect physical force, God's persuasion of the "hands" and "feet" is aimed at whatever is best given each situation.

Some may object that God's use of indirect physical force should not really be identified as God's *own* power because the use of indirect physical force relies upon God's calling upon others to act. Although this objection has some validity, it may serve as an indication of how we believe the mind and body interact. For instance, the soccer star Pele might say that he kicked a goal. At another moment, perhaps while sitting on a plane en route to a soccer match, he might suddenly feel a tingling and say that his foot was asleep. Like Pele, we sometimes talk about ourselves as if we *are* our bodies, and sometimes we talk about our bodies, or individual parts, as if they are something *other* than ourselves. It would sound strange if Pele said his *foot* kicked a goal instead of saying *he* kicked it. It would also sound strange for him to say that *he* was asleep when it was only his *foot* that was tingling.

The involuntary sleeping of Pele's foot illustrates Whitehead's panexperientialist hypothesis that muscles, tissues, cells, etc. have a degree of self-determination such that the mind does not exert complete (unilateral) control over them. We all recognize our inability to control certain bodily functions and often call such functions "involuntary." Most of the time, Pele's feet are obedient servants capable of offering numerous clips for soccer highlight films; sometimes they have a "mind" of their own.

The relation between Pele's mind and his foot is analogous to the relation between God and creatures. The God-world/mind-body analogy has a deep history in process thought. Charles Hartshorne's discussion of it serves to buttress my argument:

The body is simply that much of the world with which the mind, or personal society, has effective immediate interactions of mutual inheritance, and over which its influence is dominant. Such is God's relation to all of the world, and therefore all of it is his body. This has none of the degrading effects that giving God a body is supposed to have; indeed, it is only a way of saying that God's social relations with all things are uniquely adequate, that he really and fully loves all of them, and that they all, however inadequately or unconsciously, love him.

He continues, saying that it is *not* true,

that the lesser organisms within a mind's organism are absolutely controlled by that mind, deprived of all decisions of their own, or that what the parts of the body decide for themselves the dominant mind decides for itself. Hence creaturely freedom and God's non-responsibility for evil are compatible with the view that God is the personality of the cosmic body, the totality of societies inferior to that personal-order society which is the mind and life of God (1951:549–50).

With this in mind, let us return to the Pele illustration. In it, we see that Pele's mind has direct persuasive power over his foot. I have claimed that God exerts direct persuasion on each individual of the world. Sometimes Pele uses indirect physical force upon his foot to wake it up. This force might include raising his leg to stomp the floor thus exerting indirect physical force upon his sleeping foot. I have claimed that God sometimes uses indirect physical force—although always in love.

It is crucial to recognize that Pele's foot may never awaken because his other body parts will not respond to his attempts to get them to exert direct physical force upon his sleeping foot. It is more likely, however, that his other members will respond and Pele's foot will awaken. I claim that it is possible that God's "hands" and "feet" will fail to respond appropriately to God's call upon them to exert influence. That possibility is greater than the possibility that Pele's other members will fail to respond appropriately. This is true (by hypothesis) because Pele's mind is influencing agents whose complexity and freedom is far less than the complexity and freedom of many creatures (humans in particular) that God is influencing. However, there may be individuals (saints) who respond to the persuasive call of God as sensitively as Pele's foot responds to the persuasive influence of his mind. These individuals may be especially revelatory of God's love.

That Pele's other body parts could fail to respond to his call for them to exert direct physical force is analogous to the creaturely failure to respond properly to God's will. The prophets often pointed to the fact that Israel thwarted God's intentions for well-being by their disobedience. God's plan that all repent (2 Peter 3:9) has apparently been thwarted. It is possible, then, that those whom God is attempting to persuade or compel to be divine "hands" and "feet" to exert physical force will fail to respond appropriately, thus thwarting God's plans. This possibility helps us understand how God can be loving and yet not also culpable for the evil of our world. In other words, it serves as a key element in a viable theodicy. It is also possible, however, that the "hands" and "feet" will respond appropriately and be agents of God's power upon others. Then, the love flows freely.

The fact that the fulfillment of Pele's intention to awaken his foot is dependent upon his other members does not make these intentions any less Pele's. Thinking otherwise would be odd. Likewise, the fact that the fulfillment of God's desires, threats, or covenants is dependent upon finite hands and feet does not make these desires, threats, or covenants any less God's. The God-world/mind-body analogy helps us to see this.

It is now time to return to the question of omnipotence. The fact that God does not possess the power to determine unilaterally does not require us to deny that God is omnipotent. C.S. Lewis, a theologian often cited favorably by evangelicals, writes, "Omnipotence means power to do all that is intrinsically possible, not to do the intrinsically impossible" (1962:28). I claim that exercising unilaterally determinative power is intrinsically impossible for God.

God is omnipotent, however, in that divine power is the greatest we can intelligibly conceive the power of God to be. To say it another way, God's omnipotence means that God possesses the greatest amount of power we can reasonably believe God to possess given what has been observed in history, including events recorded in the Bible. This power is uniquely excellent in quality and scope while in no way inferior to any coherently conceivable power (Hartshorne 1984:26).

God's inability to determine unilaterally should not be seen as a limitation of God's power. "It has become customary," notes Hartshorne along these lines, "to say that we must limit divine power to save human freedom and to avoid making deity responsible for evil. But to speak of limiting a concept seems to imply that the concept, without the limitation, makes sense. The notion of a cosmic power that determines all decisions fails to make sense" (1948:138).

Defining omnipotence in this way is also important if, according to Peter Geach, we are to be true to the Biblical notion of God's power. The Bible speaks only of God as "almighty" (1977). The God who is almighty is mightier than all others. This conception is contrasted with conceptions of divine omnipotence entailing the notion that God possesses all power, is able to do the intrinsically impossible, or can unilaterally determine. Even the reference to God as "almighty" by Biblical interpreters is a purely arbitrary one, as the Scofield Bible translators point out.⁹

Finally, I submit that this conception offers a God who is worthy of awe; this is not the God who is a wimp unworthy of worship. It is a conception of the God who exercises power—persuasive, compelling, and indirectly physical—upon creatures who refuse to worship their Creator. God's glory is the ultimate harmony of love and power in such a way that this is deity worthy of worship; it is the God worthy of being loved with all of one's heart, soul, mind, and strength.

C. Robert Mesle's discussion of the worship of God as both loving and powerful is helpful on this point. He defines proper worship as centering our lives around something that is the proper focus of our ultimate commitment. While he acknowledges that displays of power provoking awe can be goads toward authentic worship, some awesome and powerful events (tornadoes,

9. I am indebted to John B. Cobb, Jr. for communicating this in personal conversations.

nuclear explosions, mass executions) are evils that should not be goads toward authentic worship. "I cannot speak for you," writes Mesle, "but sheer wrathful power may force my obedience, it cannot win my loving worship" (1993:14-5). Mesle's words serve to remind us that Christianity is a religion built around sacrificial love, not unilateral determination.

I believe that the conception of God's omnipotence for which I have been arguing coincides with the broad Biblical witness while finding strong connections to evangelical piety. This does not mean that passages cannot be found in Scripture supporting the conceptions of omnipotence I have rejected. For instance, Matthew 19:26 states: "With God all things are possible," although in this and other instances what is actually being emphasized is God's ability to grant salvation. In addition, numerous evangelical scholars admit that the logically impossible is impossible even for God. Nor does the conception of divine power presented here mean that all evangelicals will be convinced to abandon the conception of omnipotence predicated upon the notion that God can do absolutely anything. Some would rather give up the idea that God is perfectly loving than that God's omnipotence includes the ability to determine unilaterally despite the implications the latter has for the problem of evil. However, I believe the conception of omnipotence I have offered, in which God is able to do all that is intrinsically possible through the use of persuasion, compelling power, and indirect physical force, is potentially more satisfying to evangelicals who want to account for the strong God of love depicted in Scripture. The conception also meets the requirements demanded by process theologians that God's power be conceived in such a way as to prevent indicting God as culpable for the world's evil.

REFERENCES

Basinger, David

- 1984 "Divine Persuasion: Could the Process God Do More?"
Journal of Religion 64 (July): 332-47.
- 1988 *Divine Power in Process Theism: A Philosophical Critique*.
Albany, NY: SUNY.

- 1989 "Process-Relational Christian Soteriology: A Response to Wheeler" *Process Studies* 18/2 (Fall):117.
- Basinger, Randall
- 1978 "Divine Providence: A Comparison of Classical and Process Theism" *Process Studies* 8 (Winter): 283-4.
- 1986 "Evangelicals and Process Theism: Seeking a Middle Ground." *Christian Scholars Review* 15/2: 141-56.
- Calvin, John
- 1949 *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Vol. 1. Trans. John Allen. Rev. and corrected. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Franklin, Stephen T.
- 1996 "Process Thought and Evangelical Theology: An Appreciative Critique." Unpublished paper presented at The Center for Process Studies, Claremont, California.
- 1997 *The Dying of the Sacred Light: An Essay on Religion and Culture in America*. Unpublished manuscript presented at The Enlightenment in Evangelical and Process Perspectives Conference, Claremont, California, 20-22 March.
- Geach, Peter
- 1977 *Providence and Evil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Griffin, David Ray
- 1976 *God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy*. Philadelphia: Westminster.
- 1991 *Evil Revisited: Responses and Reconsiderations*. Albany, NY: SUNY.
- Hartshorne, Charles
- 1941 *Man's Vision of God*. Chicago: Willet, Clark and Company.
- 1948 *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- 1951 "Whitehead's Idea of God." In *The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, 2nd ed., 513-60. New York: Tudor.
- 1984 *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes*. Albany, NY: SUNY.
- Lewis, C.S.
- 1962 *The Problem of Pain*. New York: MacMillan.

- Lodahl, Michael Eugene
 1998 "The Whiteheadian Wesley and the Evangelical Wesley: Can They Give Each Other Their Hands?" Unpublished paper presented at a joint meeting of The Center for Process Studies and Process and Faith, Claremont, California, 24 February.
- Luther, Martin
 1955–76 *Luther's Works*. Ed. N. Pelikan and H. T. Lehman. St. Louis, MO: Concordia.
- Mesle, C. Robert
 1993 *Process Theology*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice.
- Nash, Ronald , ed.
 1987 *Process Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold
 1932 Untitled. *Christian Century* 49:415.
 1976 *Love and Justice*. Ed. D.B. Robertson. Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith.
- Pinnock, Clark, et. al.
 1994 *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
- Rice, Richard
 1980 *The Openness of God*. Nashville: Review and Herald.
- Wheeler, David L.
 1997 "Vibrant Faith and Persuasive World View: A Match Made in Heaven?" Unpublished paper presented at The Enlightenment in Evangelical and Process Perspectives Conference, Claremont, California, 20–22 March.
- Whitehead, Alfred North
 1925 *Science and the Modern World*. New York: Macmillan.
 1968 *Adventures of Ideas*. New York: Free Press; New York: Macmillan, 1933.
 1978 *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*. Corrected edition. Ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne. New York: Free Press; orig. ed., 1929.
- Williams, Daniel Day
 1949 *God's Grace and Man's Hope*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
 1968 *The Spirit and the Forms of Love*. New York: Harper and Row.

Questions of Honor in the Book of Judges¹

SHANE KIRKPATRICK

ONE HINDRANCE TO UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL TEXTS IS THE DIFFERENCE between the world of the Bible and our contemporary world (see Matthews and Benjamin 1993:xiii-xx). Interpretations of biblical texts rely upon models and theories that (re)construct the text, the language, the history, and other variables in an effort to understand the text as comprehensively as possible. Increasingly, biblical scholars are recognizing the value of studying social and cultural factors for a better understanding of ancient documents within their ancient settings. “Stories make sense only in the light of the social institutions that shape them and social institutions are intelligible only when they are interpreted in stories” (Matthews and Benjamin 1994:19). The work of anthropologists, who primarily study the social institutions, and the work of biblical scholars, who primarily study the stories, are mutually illuminating and thus beneficial for our understanding of the world of the Bible and our interpretations of its texts.

As an example, I wish to consider Judges 8:1–3 and 12:1–4. These are two short episodes in which members of the ancient Israelite tribe of Ephraim approach Gideon (Judg 8) or Jephthah (Judg 12) to rebuke them for not calling Ephraim to assist in battle. Because the reason for this occurrence is not immediately apparent, commentators attempt to explain the narratives in various ways. For example, Leslie Hoppe, in a “biblical-theological” commentary upon Joshua and Judges, writes of Judges 12:1–7:

The tribe of Ephraim *probably* claimed a certain position of dominance among the Israelites living in central Palestine. As in the Gideon story

1. This paper grew out of a Hebrew Bible seminar on “Anthropology and the Hebrew Bible” held at the University of Notre Dame, Spring 1997. I would like to express gratitude to my fellow seminar participants, including Michael Anderson, who suggested the title for this paper, as well as to our professor, Hugh R. Page, Jr.

(8:1–3), Ephraim is put out because of the independent action of a local leader. *Perhaps* the basis for Ephraim's objection is that without its participation in the move against the Ammonites, the tribe would have no right to the spoils of war that accrue to the victors. On the other hand, the story *may* reflect those countless border squabbles that take place for no good reason but which result in the loss of life for both sides in the conflict (1982:175, emphasis mine).

Likewise, when writing about the book of Judges in their *History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes evidence the same difficulty with this text:

Note that the Ephraimites, who were called to arms only after the battle was under way, upbraided Gideon for undertaking the venture without calling them (Judg. 7:24–8:3). *Apparently* the Ephraimites felt they had some claim on the actions of the Manassites. A similar situation is reflected in the relationship of Ephraim to Gilead. . . . [The Ephraimites] were offended because, specifically, Jephthah and the Gileadites had not summoned them before the battle (Judg. 12:1–6). Here again the Ephraimites *seem* to have presumed some special claim over the Gileadites (1986:97, emphasis mine).

Neither attempt suggests a substantive reason which is then defended. Rather, a few tentative suggestions are made, but the authors clearly are not convinced of the sufficiency of their suggestions.

When attention is paid to another interpretative context, however, a proposal may be made to better explain the reactions of Ephraim to both Gideon and Jephthah. In addition to the historical, literary, and theological contexts in which these narratives operate, there is that of the social and cultural context. Anthropologists have suggested that a society's culture is structured by its core values,² and many have identified honor and shame as particularly significant values in the social world of Mediterranean cultures (Peristiany 1966). Utilizing this insight for their own purposes, biblical scholars have begun to take notice of the dynamics of honor and shame in the social interactions recorded in biblical texts. Especially for New Testament criticism, scholars have made use of models of the dynamics of honor and

2. Notable in this regard is the work of Ruth Benedict; for an introductory treatment and bibliography, see Moore 1997:79–87.

shame in the ancient Mediterranean world (Malina 1993; Malina and Neyrey 1991b:25–46). Historians and classicists have preceded biblical scholars in this work by listening to ancient authors for their own descriptions and portrayals of their social worlds (e.g., Adkins 1960). As more and more ancient literature is read in this manner, the applicability of the scholarly models is confirmed and the texts are opened in new ways.

Relatively less has been done to extend these models for the purposes of Hebrew Bible criticism. Johannes Pedersen (1991; orig: 1920) included a chapter on honor and shame in his lengthy study of the life and culture of Israel. Though his chapter includes perceptive insights into the social interaction narrated in the Hebrew Bible, his model of honor as the “substance of the soul” (1991:213) is no longer current (for critique of Pedersen, see Hahn 1966:68–74; Kraus 1969:402–8). A more recent voice, that of Gary Stansell (1994) in an issue of *Semeia* dedicated entirely to “Honor and Shame in the World of the Bible,” has made profitable use of contemporary models of honor and shame to read the David narratives of 1 Samuel 16–1 Kings 2. The editors of that issue, Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, have also contributed much to this approach, including their own book, *Social World of Ancient Israel* (1993).

In studying the texts in questions from the book of Judges, I propose that honor and shame are strongly influential values that helped shape the narration of these ancient Israelite tales. After briefly presenting a model that will be further developed with the data of the specific passages, I will turn to a reading of Judges 8:1–3 and 12:1–4 according to the model. Finally, I will reflect upon the literary formation of these episodes, including their use of aggressive questions.

A MODEL OF HONOR AND SHAME³

Honor is “a claim to worth *and* the social acknowledgement of that worth” (Malina 1993:32). Honor is thus a social commodity. It entails thoughts and feelings as well as behaviors, includes both personal claims as well as public recognitions, and finds its locus both in the individual and in the social interchange between people, whether individually or corporately (Pitt-Rivers

3. I am especially indebted for my understanding of this model to the New Testament seminar on honor and shame at the University of Notre Dame, Spring 1997, and its participants, including our professor, Jerome H. Neyrey.

1968). In the case of the book of Judges, we are probably to understand its stories, even when they seem to feature an individual, as having to do mainly with group identities.⁴ The claim for honor and the recognition of honor take place in public. People engage in behaviors that presume or confer honor or dishonor based upon social expectations and the fulfillment or failure of them. In the Hebrew Bible, the vocabulary that refers to this dynamic is not always “honor” and “shame” but includes “wise” and “foolish,” “clean” and “unclean”; “the ‘Holiness Code’ in the book of Leviticus (Lev 17–26), for example, is comparable to a code of honor and shame in ancient Israel” (Matthews and Benjamin 1994:11). The court of public opinion is the final arbiter of honor and shame, making reputation one of the most important valuables to possess.

Honor is both ascribed and acquired (Malina 1993:33–7). Ascribed honor is possessed on the basis of identity—for example, the family or tribe to which one belongs. Acquired honor is gained by demonstrations of excellence, whether military, artistic, athletic, or the like. The ancient world conceived of honor as a limited commodity. One acquired honor only at the expense of another’s honor. Thus, social interactions were a constant battlefield to protect honor and/or gain more honor from others (Pitt-Rivers 1977:4–13). Anthropologists refer to such a society, with the ever-present undercurrent of challenge and contest, as an agonistic culture (Malina and Neyrey 1991b:28–9). To give one biblical example, YHWH’s call for a reduction in the number of Gideon’s troops (Judg 7:2–8) reflects this understanding of honor as a limited commodity. Judges 7:2 records that YHWH said to Gideon, “The people with you are too many for me to give Midian into their hand. Israel would only take the honor [פֶּאֶר] away from me, saying, ‘My own hand has delivered [יָשַׁע] me’” (cf. Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998:21).

In Judges 8 and 12, the narrative of the interaction between Ephraim and Gideon or Jephthah tells a story that is structured according to these basic social dynamics. Specifically, it narrates conflict between two parties in the form of the competition for honor that characterizes agonistic cultures. This contest, latent in all social interaction in such cultures, is characterized by anthropologists as “challenge and riposte” (Bourdieu 1966:197–215). Based on the work of Bourdieu, Malina provides not only a thorough description

4. For helpful insights into ancient concepts of group identity, see Malina 1989; Malina and Neyrey 1991a:69–83. For honor as the collective possession of groups, see Pitt-Rivers 1977:13–6.

of the dynamics involved (1993:34–7; supplemented by Malina and Neyrey 1991b:29–32) but also a helpful diagram (1993:36), from which the following is adapted (cf. the very similar diagram in Bourdieu 1966:215).

ACTION
Claim or challenge; a *claim* can be in the form of words or deeds, and, though not necessarily directed towards another party, it can be perceived as a *challenge* that is addressed to another and can be either positive or negative.

<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
word of praise	insult
gift	physical affront
request for help	threat
promise of help and help	threat and attempt to fulfill it

PERCEPTION
The receiver perceives the message of the action in terms of claims to self-worth and in light of the public norms for response, including the requirement of equal social status for the contestants.

RESPONSE
The receiver must now respond, assured that a public verdict will immediately follow with a grant or rejection of honor. The form of the response or reaction can vary along the following range:

<i>Positive rejection</i>	<i>Acceptance</i>	<i>Negative refusal</i>
scorn, disdain, contempt	response that entails a counter-challenge	no response
if the parties are equals, vengeance is required from the challenger; if the challenger is inferior, nothing is required	exchange (contest, game) continues	dishonor

Note that the game may be commenced with an initial claim, often an action, that is understood to be a challenge; this will be significant in our reading of

Judges 8 and 12. A claim against one's honor can be perceived in the words or the deeds of another party. In both cases, it is a claim to enter the social space of another either positively, to share in the prestige of the other, or negatively, to take away or diminish the other's reputation. This action is then interpreted according to the seriousness of the challenge to one's honor. The riposte, or response, can take many different forms. Three main responses are possible. First, positive rejection, that is, scorning the challenge, is the proper response from one who is challenged by a social inferior. However, for contestants who are socially equal, a response of disdain requires that the challenger follow through on the attempt to wrest honor from the other. For example, if the initial challenge had been a threat, the challenger must carry out the threat. Second, negative refusal, on the other end of the range, also consists in not responding. In this case, however, the failure to respond to the challenge results in dishonor for the one who thereby demonstrates inability to counter-challenge the challenger. As Malina and Neyrey summarize:

The challenge, then, is a threat to usurp the reputation of another, to deprive another of personal reputation. When the person challenged cannot or does not respond to the challenge posed by an equal, personal reputation is lost in the eyes of the public. People will say he cannot or does not know how to defend his honor. Honor is thus lost to the challenger, who correspondingly gains in honor (1991b:31; cf. Malina 1993:37).

Third, the counter-challenge is another possible, and frequent, response in riposte. In this case, the one who was challenged accepts the challenge and responds in kind, thus perpetuating the contest. This abstract model becomes more clear when its elements are demonstrated by the specific evidence from the text.

I propose that the interaction between Ephraim and Gideon or Jephthah in Judges can be illuminated by the conflictual exchange evident in the dynamics of honor and shame. The above model provides a lens by which to read these episodes and appreciate the role that honor and shame plays in the narrative presentation. I will begin with the story of Jephthah in Judges 12:1–4 because it provides a fuller example of the various phases in the game of challenge and riposte.

JUDGES 12:1–4

^{12:1} The men of Ephraim were called to arms, and they marched to the north, and they said to Jephthah, “Why did you march to battle with the Ammonites but did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house down around you with fire.” ² Jephthah said to them, “I and my people had great strife with the Ammonites, and I called you to arms but you did not deliver [יִשַׁע] me from their hand. ³ When I saw that you were not a deliverer [מֹרְשִׁיעַ], I took my life in my own hands and I marched against the Ammonites, and YHWH gave them into my hand. So why have you come up against me today—to battle me?” ⁴ And Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead and he battled Ephraim. The men of Gilead defeated Ephraim; for they said, “You, Gilead, are fugitives from Ephraim, from between Ephraim and Manasseh.”⁵

This episode follows directly upon the story of Jephthah’s vow that led him to sacrifice his daughter. The events that lead up to that story, however, begin with Ammonite oppression in Judges 10:6. Jephthah, the son of a prostitute, has been driven out from his father’s house, but is later recruited by the elders of Gilead—his home territory—to return and lead them against the Ammonites. Anthropologists have identified both military prowess and social precedence as means of acquiring honor (Malina and Neyrey 1991b:28–9). As an illegitimate child, Jephthah lacks ascribed honor, a point emphasized by his ignoble dismissal from the family, “You shall not inherit anything in our father’s house; for you are the son of another woman” (Judg 11:2). However, Jephthah acquires honor through his military skill— “[he] was a mighty warrior” (11:1)—and is granted positions of status in Gilead—“the people made him head [רֹאשׁ] and commander [קִצִּין] over them” (11:11). He does battle against the Ammonites, and he is successful, even at the cost of his daughter’s life. Then, in Judges 12, the Ephraimites appear and question Jephthah about his battles with the Ammonites.

Our episode begins with Ephraim questioning Jephthah. There is no specific lexical element that reveals that their argument concerns honor. However, the biblical narrative trades on the currency of honor and shame; honor is to be acquired from both the spoils of the battle as well as the demonstration of excellence in victory, and the parties contend with each other by

5. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

means of threats and shaming, derogatory remarks. Military conquest like Jephthah's over the Ammonites is certainly an example of excellence; thus it bestows honor in and of itself (cf. 1 Sam 21:12—Saul's thousands slain, David's ten thousands), but it also results in wealth from spoils, which is likewise an integral element of honor (Pitt-Rivers 1968:507). Pedersen certainly recognized military exploits as an integral component of a claim to honor (1991:216–26). As Judges 12 is read according to the model of challenge and riposte, the model elucidates the passage as a contest for honor.

ACTION

Claim

Jephthah, with divine assistance, defeats the Ammonites (11:32)

PERCEPTION

Ephraim takes Jephthah's military action as a *challenge* to their status as “deliverer” (מושיע) of Israel

RESPONSE

Ephraim therefore responds with an *acceptance* of the challenge by issuing a *counter-challenge*, by which the contest continues

Ephraim's counter-challenge becomes the action that begins the cycle anew:

ACTION

(Counter-) Challenge

Ephraim questions Jephthah and issues a threat: “We will burn your house down around you with fire” (12:1)

PERCEPTION

Jephthah accuses Ephraim of failure to “deliver” (12:2–3), and presses his advantage by issuing his own provocative question, “why have you come up against me today—to battle me?” (12:3)

RESPONSE

Jephthah thus responds with an *acceptance* of Ephraim's challenge by gathering the men of Gilead and battling Ephraim (12:5)

Now the contest is ended as one party scores a decisive victory. In this case, the Ephraimites are not able to defend their honor against the military prowess of Jephthah, who strikes down 42,000 Ephraimites (12:6), making a mockery of Ephraim's label as "deliverer" and avenging the insulting derogation of the Gileadites as "fugitives of Ephraim" (12:5). The first cycle of the contest is not narrated as explicitly as is the second.

In the second cycle, the question posed by Ephraim in Judges 12:1 is a *challenge* issued in response to a perceived challenge from Jephthah. Recall that a challenge can be positive or negative and can take the form of words, deeds, or both. In this case, Ephraim's is a negative challenge, especially when taken in tandem with the next statement that Ephraim makes to Jephthah, "we will burn your house down around you with fire." This statement, in the terms of our model, is clearly a *threat*. The text does not fully narrate the "perception" phase of the contest. The narrative moves directly to the "reaction" of Jephthah, and some reconstruction of perception can be found in Jephthah's response. One might argue with Boling (1975:211–4) that Jephthah had tried to avoid engaging in battle with the Ammonites but, when Ephraim proved to be of no help (יִשָּׁע), Jephthah ventured forth and was granted victory. Accompanying the victory, then, was a concomitant rise in both Jephthah's own honor and in Ephraim's estimation of such. The text even emphasizes the divine favor that Jephthah enjoys (Judg 11:29, 32), which is a significant boon of ascribed honor. Ephraim moves quickly to claim a share of the glory. Jephthah interprets Ephraim's threat as a challenge to prove his prowess by battling Ephraim—"why have you come up to me today? To fight against me?" (Boling's trans., 1975: 211).

Jephthah's response, which again is cast in the form of a question, is an *acceptance* of Ephraim's challenge. Ephraim's failure to act as a deliverer is coupled with Jephthah's resounding victory to provide Jephthah with a sense of advantage over Ephraim. In accepting Ephraim's challenge, the contest continues. In this case, a battle ensues. And indeed Jephthah defeats Ephraim, protecting his own honor and despoiling his opponents of theirs. Judges 12:5–6 go on to narrate the slaying of 42,000 Ephraimites at the hands of the Gileadites. Whether or not these verses, and even the latter half of verse 4, are original to the episode in 12:1–4a (see Soggin 1987:221), they certainly provide a fitting and honorable conclusion to this contest. Jephthah responds to the challenge of words and threat of actions with his own words and decisive actions.

JUDGES 8:1–3

The earlier episode involving Gideon opens in a very similar manner.

^{8:1} And the men of Ephraim said to him, “What is this thing you have done to us, not to summon us when you went to fight against Midian?” and they rebuked him severely [וִירִיבוֹן אֹתוֹ]. ² But he said to them, “What have I done now compared to you? Are not the left-overs collected from Ephraim better than the best produced by Abiezer? ³ God has given the leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, into your hand. But what was I able to do in comparison to you?” Then their spirited vigor against him abated after he made this statement.

Gideon’s story begins in Judges 6. This time, the oppression comes from the Midianites. Gideon, son of Joash the Abiezrite (6:11), is sent by YHWH to deliver (יִשַׁע) Israel (6:14). Gideon objects to the mission—a common element in response to the divine call (cf. Exod 3:11; Jer 1:6)—on the basis of being the youngest son in the weakest family of Manasseh (6:15). To be the weakest is certainly not to share in the honor of the strong, whose prowess ensures their status. Despite these protestations, however, Gideon enjoys great victories with YHWH’s help. Gideon thus has the ascribed honor of divine favor in the absence of ascribed honor based on genealogy. Indeed, his stature rises to such heights that, because he has “delivered” (יִשַׁע) them, his compatriots attempt to establish him as ruler (מֶשֶׁל) over them, complete with an established dynasty (8:22). In an action reminiscent of his response to Ephraim in 8:1–3, Gideon declines this offer, which is a potential grant of great honor.

At the end of Judges 7, Israel is pursuing Midian after Gideon’s victory which set the Midianites to flight. Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh are all named in Judges 7:23 as participants. Gideon sends word בְּכָל-הָהָר אֶפְרַיִם “throughout the hill country of Ephraim” (7:24), to which the men of Ephraim respond. Having captured Oreb and Zeeb, the two princes of Midian, they bring their heads to Gideon (7:25). Thus the stage is set for the confrontation in 8:1–3. Reading it according to the model of challenge and riposte, Ephraim again offers a *challenge* in the form of a question of reproach. It is not followed by a threat but an *insult*, as we are told that Ephraim rebuked Gideon severely. A public rebuke is a source of great shame.

This final phrase in 8:1 is translated a number of different ways. The Hebrew verb **רִיב** can mean “to argue with,” as Boling translates it (1975:150). However, that connotation is frequently evoked by use of the preposition **עִם** with the verb—“to quarrel *with*” (e.g., Gen 26:20; Job 9:3). The construction in Judges 8:1 employs not **עִם** but **אֵת**. Here, and in other passages with this construction, I prefer the connotation of rebuke, as Soggin translates, “they upbraided him violently” (1987:146). Other similar passages include Nehemiah 5:7, 13:11, and 13:17, the latter two of which find expression in the New American Standard Bible as “reprimand.” Isaiah 45:9–10 makes for an interesting example, not only for its use of this construction but also for its use of questions as the vehicle for this reproof, a point to which I shall return below. As a final example, **רִיב** appears in parallel with **יִכַּח**, “to reprove, rebuke,” in Hosea 4:4. While such evidence from grammatical constructions is not determinative of connotations, the term in question certainly has rebuke within its semantic field.⁶

In terms of our model, Ephraim’s rebuke is a challenge to Gideon, and it is offered in response to an action of Gideon that is perceived as a challenge to Ephraim.

ACTION

Claim

Gideon and his small band set the Midianites to flight (7:19–23)

PERCEPTION

Ephraim takes Gideon’s independent military action as a *challenge*

RESPONSE

Ephraim therefore responds with an *acceptance* of the challenge by issuing a *counter-challenge*, by which the contest continues

Again, Ephraim’s counter-challenge becomes an action that continues the cycle:

6. Interestingly, the same word, **רִיב**, appears as a noun in Jephthah’s response to Ephraim in Judges 12:2. There, with even less lexical support, Soggin labels Ephraim’s words in 12:1 a “reproach” and refers the reader to Judges 8:1–3 for comparison (1987:220).

ACTION

(Counter-) Challenge

Ephraim rebukes Gideon and questions his tactics: “What is this thing you have done to us, not to summon us when you went to fight against Midian?” (8:1)

PERCEPTION

Gideon considers the weakness of his ancestral heritage and chooses not to continue the contest through combat with Ephraim.

RESPONSE

Gideon uses a proverb (8:2) to emphasize his social inferiority, thus removing the need for him to respond to Ephraim’s inappropriate (counter-)challenge.

Thus the contest is ended with Gideon retaining his acquired honor from the battle while deferring to Ephraim on the basis of the unequal ascribed honor of their families. The lack of narrative evidence for the “perception” phase of the contest is even more pronounced in Gideon’s story than it is in Jephthah’s. Gideon does answer them with a question, but it is not aggressive. Rather, the answer is one of self-deprecation. Gideon quotes—or slightly adapts, perhaps (cf. Boling 1975:151; Soggin 1987:147)—a proverb about the relative status of Abiezer, his own ancestral house, to that of Ephraim, whose second-effort achievements still outshine Abiezer’s best. The term I have translated “left-overs” is the noun usually rendered “gleaning” (עַלְלִי). Gleaning is a practice that carries connotations of status; it is the poor, the weak, the inferior who glean, who pick up the grain, grapes, or other harvest that is left after the landowner has reaped the best produce. Deuteronomy legislates this practice (again, עַלְלִי) as a service to the “alien, the orphan, and the widow” (24:20). The alien widow Ruth gleaned (לִקֵּט) in the fields of Boaz (Ruth 2). Gideon invokes this symbol of inferior status by suggesting that the harvest of his own house of Abiezer is not even comparable to the produce left behind by Ephraim for gleaners.

Gideon then specifies the meaning of the proverb in terms of the present battle, in which Ephraim has killed Oreb and Zeeb, and finally he repeats the question of comparison—a comparison of social ranking in which Gideon does not measure up well. This is clearly not a *positive rejection* of Ephraim’s challenge. Nor does Gideon *accept* the challenge, as does Jephthah. Perhaps,

then, this is a *negative refusal*, resulting in dishonor for Gideon. But such a conclusion does not fit well with other elements in the story of Gideon. Gideon is considered a man of honor upon his death “at a ripe old age” (8:32), and he is the sire of seventy sons (8:30). Lastly, his two confrontations with the men of Succoth and Penuel recorded in 8:4–17, both of which can also profitably be read in terms of challenge and riposte (see below), clearly leave Gideon with the upper hand.

For an explanation of this anomaly, then, we turn to another dynamic in the “casuistry” of this system, which is appropriately described as “extremely subtle” (Bourdieu 1966:205). My abstract diagram of the model presented above is unable to capture the element of status equality with sufficient nuance. We have noted that only equals may engage in this contest for honor—a fact that allows for the possibility of positive rejection. That is, the party of higher status may ignore the challenge of an inferior without risking loss of honor. On the other hand, in the case where a superior challenges an inferior, the inferior party can retain honor without prevailing in combat over the superior foe (Bourdieu 1966:206).

The offended party can also cause [dishonour] to fall upon the offender without having recourse to riposte. To do this it is sufficient for him to adopt an attitude of humility, which, by emphasizing his weakness, makes apparent the arbitrary, unfair and immoderate character of the offence.... This inequality is normal among those who are recognized by society as weak individuals, clients...or members of a small family (Bourdieu 1966:206–7).

Thus, Gideon invokes his status as the youngest son in the weakest family of Manasseh (6:15) when he quotes the humbling proverb of 8:3. Upon hearing his response—his choice of this self-humbling approach—Ephraim’s רווח was reduced. One wonders whether the use of רווח here carries any peculiar connotations to reflect their diminished honor in light of Gideon’s maneuver.

Gideon has brought this particular contest to an end as also Jephthah had decisively put an end to his contest, but the beginnings of the exchanges deserve a second look. As already noted with both passages, the narrative of the confrontation itself begins with the challenge of Ephraim, but important events that contribute to the story are narrated in the immediately preceding verses. There is good reason to propose what commentators have intuitively already recognized—that the military victories of Gideon and

Jephthah were perceived by Ephraim as a threat to their honor of pre-eminent status (Gray 1986:208, 294, 320; Hoppe 1982:175; Soggin 1987:148). The fullest schematization of these two episodes, then, begins with the claim of Ephraim to a position of precedence. Ephraim takes the independent military victories by Gideon and Jephthah as challenges, perceiving the activity as potentially a denial of their own precedence (see Pedersen 1991:218). They therefore respond by accepting the challenge and offering a counter-challenge. The counter-challenge is articulated as a question and appears as the opening scenes of Judges 8 and Judges 12. Thereafter, Gideon ends the contest with self-deprecation while Jephthah offers his own counter-challenge, which he follows with decisive and culminating action. In both cases, after the claim in the form of action (military victory), both the challenge (from Ephraim) and the riposte (the responses of Gideon and Jephthah) are cast in the form of questions.

THE AGGRESSIVE USE OF QUESTIONS

We have had occasion to notice already the prominent role played by questions that drive the stories forward. Stansell, in his study of the David narratives, identifies an insult used by Nabal as a form of the positive rejection of a challenge (1994:62–3). The constitutive parts of this insult include rhetorical questions: “Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse?... Shall I take my bread and my water and the meat that I have butchered for my shearers, and give it to men who come from I do not know where?” (1 Sam 25:10–11). Considering the evidence in Judges, it is not surprising that Nabal’s scorn takes the form of questions. The questions of Ephraim, as well as those of the counter-challenging Jephthah, were hardly curious musings. They themselves embodied the offensive step forward. Indeed, questions can function to further the exchange regardless of the peculiar mix of positive or negative challenge and response. Thus, in the story of Gideon pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian (8:4–21; presented according to the dynamics of honor and shame by Pedersen 1991:219), Gideon approaches the men of Succoth (8:5) and Penuel (8:8) with a positive challenge in the form of a request for help. The response he receives is contempt couched in the form of a question, “Do you now have Zebah and Zalmunna in custody, that we should give your army food?” (8:6; “and the men of Penuel answered him just as the men of Succoth had answered him,” 8:8). Gideon, claiming not to be inferior to these two groups, is now required to exact vengeance. To that

end, Gideon counter-challenges with threats (8:7, 9). After capturing Zebah and Zalmunna, he indeed returns and carries out his threats against both Succoth and Penuel, recalling the former's insulting question in the process, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me, saying, 'Do you now have Zebah and Zalmunna...?'" (8:14–16).

The book of Judges abounds with examples of aggressive questioning, as the following list indicates:⁷

6:13–Gideon questions YHWH's power, not recognizing his interlocutor until 6:22:

"But sir, if YHWH is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our ancestors recounted to us, saying, 'Did not YHWH bring us up from Egypt?'"

9:2–Abimelech recruits men against Gideon's sons:

"Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal rule over you, or that one rule over you?"

9:7–15–The trees in Jotham's parable respond with questions when offered kingship:

"Shall I stop producing my rich oil by which gods and mortals are honored, and go to sway over the trees?" (9:9); "Shall I stop producing my sweetness and my delicious fruit, and go to sway over the trees?" (9:11); "Shall I stop producing my wine that cheers gods and mortals, and go to sway over the trees?" (9:13).

9:28–29–Gaal ben Ebed speaks against Abimelech and Zebul:

"Who is Abimelech, and who are we of Shechem, that we should serve him? Did not the son of Jerubbaal and Zebul his officer serve the men of Hamor father of Shechem? Why then should we serve him? And who will give me command over this people?"⁸

9:38–Zebul mocks Gaal ben Ebed with his own question (from 9:28–29):

"Where is your boast now, you who said, 'Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?' Are not these the troops you made light of?"

11:7–Jephthah questions the Gileadite elders' request for help:

7. The translations are those of the New Revised Standard Version, except that I have replaced "the Lord" with "YHWH."

8. My translation of the final question diverges from that of the NRSV, which renders a positive statement of desire, "If only this people were under my command!" The Hebrew form, however, follows that of the initial questioning: **וְנָמִי יִתֵּן** ("Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem...?"); **מִי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וּמִי שֶׁכֶּם** ("And who will give...?").

“Are you not the very ones who rejected me and drove me out of my father’s house? So why do you come to me now when you are in trouble?”

11:12, 23–26–Jephthah confronts Ammon:

“What is there between you and me, that you have come to me to fight against my land?” (11:12); “So now YHWH, the God of Israel, has conquered the Amorites for the benefit of his people Israel. Do you intend to take their place? Should you not possess what your god Chemosh gives you to possess? And should we not be the ones to possess everything that YHWH our God has conquered for our benefit? Now are you any better than King Balak son of Zippor of Moab? Did he ever enter into conflict with Israel, or did he ever go to war with them? While Israel lived in Heshbon and its villages, and in Aroer and its villages, and in all the towns that are along the Arnon, three hundred years, why did you not recover them within that time?” (11:23–26).

14:12–14–Samson’s wedding riddle (see Bourdieu 1966:203).

14:15–The wedding guests complain to Samson’s wife:

“Have you invited us here to impoverish us?”

15:11–3,000 men of Judah rebuke Samson:

“Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then have you done to us?”

15:18–Samson’s complaint to YHWH can be construed as a question:

“Am I now to die of thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?”

18:19–The spies of Dan recruit Micah’s priest for themselves:

“Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one person, or to be priest to a tribe and clan in Israel?”

18:23–24–Micah confronts Dan; Dan responds:

“‘What is the matter that you come with such a company?’ He replied, ‘You take my gods that I made, and the priest, and go away, and what have I left? How then can you ask me, “What is the matter?”’”

19:30–The Septuagint (Codex Alexandrinus) records the call to battle as a question:

“Has such a thing ever happened since the day that the Israelites came up from the land of Egypt until this day?”

20:12–Israel reproaches Benjamin:

“What crime is this that has been committed among you?”

Stansell’s study indicates that this use of questions is not limited to the book of Judges. Patrick D. Miller points out that complaints against God regularly take the form of “questions directed to God” (1994:70). He lists several ex-

amples from throughout the Hebrew Bible, including the frequent “Why?” and “How long?” of the Psalms (1994:70–9).

The questions of complaint are varied, but all of them are a direct *challenge* to the way God has *acted* or *threatened* to act—the failure to provide promised offspring to Abraham, delivering the people from slavery only to let them die at the hands of others, allowing faithful servants to be victims or bearers of evil (Moses and Elijah), a lack of compassion and forgiveness.... [The questions] are a protest, not a request for information (1994:71, emphasis mine).

The literary use of questions throughout the Hebrew Bible would bear closer study. The use of questions as tools in the aggressive contest for honor is certainly one major category of their usage.

CONCLUSION

Matthews and Benjamin encourage attention to both the mythos, “the story a people tell,” and the ethos, “the way a people live,” of a culture (1994:19). With only texts and not direct access to the world of the Bible, biblical scholars recognize the fortunate interrelations between mythos and ethos. The two are recognizable in each other. The anthropologist Victor Turner analyzed conflict in terms of “social drama” (1974:37–42). Jerry D. Moore notes that Turner’s development of the idea of social drama led him to study Icelandic sagas and even theatre (1997:232). There, within the performing arts, Turner found the contemporary inheritors of the ancient rituals of social drama cast in terms of “mythic and heroic plots drawn from oral traditions” (1985:295). The book of Judges, as a piece of national literature recounting the ancient history of Israel as a people (and as a part of the Deuteronomistic History; see Gottwald 1985:138–9, 230), was surely constructed of just such heroic plots and oral traditions (Boling 1975:29–38; Gray 1986:189–93). Norman K. Gottwald even uses the term “saga,” again drawing from the Icelandic model, to describe the literary form in which the Gideon and Jephthah stories are recorded (1985:237; cf. “hero-saga,” Gray 1986:207). He defines “saga” as “brief imaginative stories of simple plot and few characters, set in a traditional past and lacking documentation, that recount the deeds of ancestors or leaders in overcoming great difficulties” (1985:98). To make such stories from the distant past come to life for readers and listeners, detail is

filled in and dialogue is provided—surely not preserved from eye-witness accounts. The details are cast in terms comprehensible to the audience, reflective of common underlying social patterns.

As a modern example, consider the *Star Wars* movie trilogy; its unrealistic setting in intergalactic space does not render the story incomprehensible because the imaginative setting is used to tell a story that is entirely within our common experience, accurately portraying our social infrastructure and social interactions within it. The story reflects our way of life, and our way of life is understood through the story. Thus mythos and ethos are mutually supportive and illuminating.

This interdependence can be illustrated by comparing a reading of Judges that focuses primarily on the mythos with the reading of Judges presented above that focuses primarily on the ethos. In a structuralist reading of Judges, David Jobling adds 3:27–29 to our two episodes (7:24–8:3, 12:1–6) and considers these three “fords of the Jordan” incidents from a literary perspective (1995:110–5). Jobling suggests a negative progression in these three incidents, beginning with a “harmonious” episode in 3:27–9 in which the judge Ehud summons Ephraim and together they defeat Moab. In 7:24–8:3, however, the judge Gideon summons Ephraim late to the battle and conflict between the two is necessary before Ephraim is appeased. Finally, in 12:1–6, when the judge Jephthah fails to summon Ephraim, conflict again results and Ephraim is not appeased but defeated. Comparing these literary dynamics to the dynamics of honor and shame emphasized above, we may suggest a reading of Judges that demonstrates the complementarity of these approaches.

The narrator of Judges has used the interplay of literary and cultural cues to create dissonance and move the narrative forward. In the same way that the three “fords of the Jordan” incidents have a negative progression from harmony to anti-Ephraim conflict, so too do their presentations of Ephraim’s honor. In 3:27–29, things are presented as they ought to be—Ephraim is recognized and performs as a military leader of Israel. Later, Gideon’s actions jeopardize that ideal and injure Ephraim’s honor. Jephthah, finally, strips Ephraim of status and honor, destroying the ideal manifested by Ehud. Thus, while Jephthah acquires honor by his actions, these actions do not contribute positively to the book. The reader is reminded that Jephthah’s victory over the Ammonites cost him his daughter’s life (as the result of a foolish vow); he judged Israel only six years (12:7) rather than the eighty years of rest enjoyed by Israel under Ehud (3:30) or the forty under Gideon (8:28); he died

childless, just as he had been born fatherless. These clues provide a dissonant note that resounds against Jephthah's acquired honor. Jobling asks whether the narrator takes sides—is the narrative pro-judge (whoever the judge may be) or pro-Ephraim (1995:112–23)? Both of the above readings suggest that there is a concern in the narrative beyond that of merely presenting honorable heroes. In the thematic statement of Judges 2:11–19, verse 19 emphasizes that each relapse of Israel into apostasy is worse than the previous one. The book presents a progressive deterioration of each generation of Israel, and the judges themselves are less and less appealing characters. Especially when Ephraim is understood as “the core of Israel” (McKenzie 1966:98, 149), we may suggest, along with Jobling (1995:113), that the reader is led to identify with Ephraim in these episodes that demonstrate the negative progression of the times. In terms of honor and shame, Ephraim's honor progressively disintegrates. In the defeat at the hands of Jephthah, we observe the nadir of disgrace to which Ephraim, the core of Israel, has fallen.

Episodes like those in Judges 8:1–3 and 12:1–4, located in the distant past, find life in the art of the narrator. The device of using aggressive questions as vehicles for contests for honor is not merely a literary motif but also a genuine reflection of the social world of the narrator and original audience. Thus, the stories of Ephraim with Gideon or Jephthah in Judges 8 and 12 are constructed according to the dynamics of social interactions well-known in the ancient biblical world. This social drama plays itself out as a contest for honor with its details undoubtedly lost to antiquity, which provides only the broad outline of the hero's story. The detail is provided by the tradition that has shaped and preserved these episodes. The narrator has crafted the form of the dialogue to communicate more than the speakers themselves can say. To the extent that our world no longer recognizes either the cues provided or the forms employed, we are left to propose theories about how best to understand these ancient narratives.

In response to the difficulties raised by the treatments of Hoppe and of Miller and Hayes, I have suggested that the cultural model of the challenge and riposte contest for honor provides another and better way to read both Judges 8:1–3 and Judges 12:1–4. I submit that the episodes are not pointless “border squabbles” (Hoppe 1982:175; cf. Soggin 1987:221). Indeed, spoils of war are at stake (Hoppe 1982:175), and one of those spoils is surely honor (which the wealth of spoils helps to bolster; Pitt-Rivers 1968:507). It is *honor* that constitutes the “special claim” (Miller and Hayes 1986:97) that Ephraim presumes over Gideon and Jephthah. As Pedersen articulates it, “the

Ephraimites claimed to be the strongest family or tribe, whose honour the others had to acknowledge” (1991:217). The rebukes of Judges 8:1–3 and 12:1–4 are Ephraim’s attempts to protect that honor.

REFERENCES

- Adkins, Arthur W. H.
1960 *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Boling, Robert G.
1975 *Judges*. Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co.
- Bourdieu, Pierre
1966 “The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle Society.” Trans. Philip Sherrard. In *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J.G. Peristiany, 191–241. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gottwald, Norman K.
1985 *The Hebrew Bible—A Socio-literary Introduction*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Gray, John
1986 *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Hagedorn, Anselm C., and Jerome H. Neyrey
1998 “‘It Was Out of Envy that They Handed Jesus Over’ (Mark 15:10): The Anatomy of Envy and the Gospel of Mark.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 69:15–56.
- Hahn, Herbert F.
1966 *The Old Testament in Modern Research*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Hoppe, Leslie
1982 *Joshua, Judges*. Old Testament Message, 5. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier.

- Jobling, David
1995 "Structuralist Criticism: The Text's World of Meaning." In *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Gale A. Yee, 91–118. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Kraus, Hans-Joachim
1969 *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.
- Malina, Bruce J.
1989 "Dealing With Biblical (Mediterranean) Characters: A Guide for U.S. Consumers." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 19:127–41.
1993 *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. Rev. ed. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox.
- Malina, Bruce J., and Jerome H. Neyrey
1991a "First-Century Personality: Dyadic, not Individual." In *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey, 67–96. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
1991b "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World." In *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey, 25–65. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Matthews, Victor H., and Don C. Benjamin
1993 *Social World of Ancient Israel, 1250–587 BCE*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
1994 "Social Sciences and Biblical Studies." *Semeia* 68:7–21.
- McKenzie, John L.
1966 *The World of the Judges*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Miller, J. Maxwell, and John H. Hayes
1986 *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*. Philadelphia: Westminster.
- Miller, Patrick D.
1994 *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Moore, Jerry D.
1997 *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.

Pedersen, Johannes

- 1991 *Israel: Its Life and Culture*. Vol. 1. South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism, 28. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Peristiany, J. G., ed.

- 1966 *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pitt-Rivers, Julian

- 1968 "Honor." *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Vol. 6, 503–11. Macmillan.
- 1977 *The Fate of Shechem, or the Politics of Sex: Essays in the Anthropology of the Mediterranean*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Soggin, J. Alberto

- 1987 *Judges*. 2nd ed. Old Testament Library. London: SCM Press.

Stansell, Gary

- 1994 "Honor and Shame in the David Narratives." *Semeia* 68:55–79.

Turner, Victor

- 1974 *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- 1985 "Are There Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual, and Drama?" In *On the Edge of the Bush*, ed. Edith L. B. Turner, 291–301. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Han and the Context of Theology for Korean North American Women

GRACE JI-SUN KIM

INTRODUCTION

KOREAN WOMEN HAVE HISTORICALLY EXPERIENCED OPPRESSION AND domination with deep roots in both patriarchal culture and religion. Through their hardships and suffering, these women have accumulated much *han*. *Han* is a prevalent and important term for Korean people, as it communicates their feelings of suffering which have been repressed either by themselves or through the oppression of others. It can be translated as “just indignation,” and is a deep feeling that rises out of the unjust experience of the people (K. Suh 1981:24-5). “*Han* is a sense of unresolved resentment against injustice suffered, a sense of helplessness because of the overwhelming odds against, a feeling of total abandonment, a feeling of acute pain of sorrow in one’s guts and bowels making the whole body writhe and wiggle, and an obstinate urge to take ‘revenge’ and to right the wrong all these constitute” (Chung 1990b:30). Korean people embody this *han* as they experience oppression and suffering in their daily lives; it is “the suppressed, amassed and condensed experience of oppression caused by mischief or misfortune so that it forms a kind of ‘lump’ in one’s spirit” (Chung 1990b:30). It is “an underlying feeling of Korean people. It is a dominant feeling of defeat, resignation, and nothingness. But on the other hand, it is a feeling with a tenacity of will for life which comes to weaker beings” (N. Suh 1981:58). It comes especially to women, who are the most disadvantaged.

When Korean women immigrated to North America, they took their *han* with them. In the land which had promised them freedom and joy, they began to accumulate even more *han* as they remained dominated and subordinated due to other barriers. In their new land, they faced racism and

marginalization. They also suddenly found themselves caught between cultures which had very different expectations of them. Thus *han* is ever more present in the lives of Korean women immigrants and remains a pressing concern for them. It is out of this particular context of oppression and *han* that these Korean North American women need to engage and do their theology. A step towards these women's liberation is to release the *han* which they have accumulated throughout their lives.

This essay will demonstrate the importance of understanding one's context for doing theology by tracing the history of oppression and *han* faced by Korean women immigrants to North America. I will examine the history of immigration and the hardships of early immigrant picture brides, as well as the modern struggles of the third wave of immigrant women, the role of the immigrant church in their lives, and their identity as marginalized people. This essay will conclude with a discussion of the movement towards a liberating Christian theology, as many Korean North American women are turning to Christianity as a way to release their *han*.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF KOREAN IMMIGRATION

For Koreans, emigration has been a foreign concept and has traditionally not been very well accepted. Emigration was at first disapproved of by Koreans, as leaving Korea meant cutting off one's roots and blood ties and experiencing social or spiritual death; most were not attracted to the idea of moving far away to another land, as it meant breaking ties to their ancestral past. However, when missionaries came to Korea, they encouraged emigration among the newly converted. Missionaries like the Rev. George Heber Jones offered an image of the United States as "the land in which milk and honey overflowed" and thus, for these new Korean Christians, emigration offered promise and hope for a new life. From the beginning, emigration and Christianity had a close relationship, and Christianity became the main religion of emigrants from Korea. Immigration into the United States began in 1903, and nearly half of the 101 immigrants on the first ship to the United States (55 men, 21 women and 25 children) were from the Rev. Jones' Yongdong church in Inchon. The history of this first Korean Methodist church offers a clear indication of this missionary's impact on Korean emigration (A. Kim 1996:28).

The major motives for Koreans to emigrate to America in the early twentieth century were both economic and political. Korea had recently experienced several famines and, for this reason, some were eager to move to a bet-

ter land. Furthermore, the sugar plantations in the Hawaiian islands were experiencing massive, well-organized protests by overworked Chinese and Japanese male workers, and therefore another source of cheap labor was needed (J. Kim 1997:3). Thus many single Korean men grabbed the opportunity to leave their poverty-stricken country and sailed to America with high hopes of earning money.

Korean immigration to the United States occurred in three major waves. Korean political exiles were living in the United States as early as 1885, but the first significant wave of immigration was to Hawaii, from 1903 to 1905. The first wave can best be described as immigrants who were concerned with the Korean political situation or interested in Christianity and the Christian churches. This era saw the importation of many brides into North America, the birth of a second generation in the immigrant community, ethnic dormancy, rapid acculturation, and rising rates of intermarriage due to the lack of young Korean women. The second wave was after the Korean war, from 1950 to 1953, and involved a more heterogeneous group, consisting of wives of American servicemen, war orphans and students. Less data exists about them because they did not form their own groups but integrated themselves into the dominant culture; this group will not be treated at length in this essay.

The current wave, which is still in progress, began as a result of immigration reform through the 1965 Immigration Act. These immigrants are contending with a multitude of issues, including cultural and linguistic differences, parent-child stress, and changes in roles, especially among women. They are also dealing with concerns such as cultural conflicts in norms and values, achieving healthy self-identification in a predominantly white society, and varied levels of acceptance of Korean immigrants by both the majority culture and other minority groups already living in North America (Kitano & Daniels 1988:113–8).

PICTURE BRIDES: THE FIRST WAVE

Since many male workers in the first wave immigrated to North America at a young age (17–25 years old), many remained bachelors for a long time due to the lack of young Korean women. Many men wanted to get married and thus sent pictures back to Korea with hopes of being matched with a suitable bride. In many cases the pictures worked and many marriages were arranged. However, many brides arrived on U.S. shores having been deceived by their prospective husbands, as the husbands were usually ten to twenty

years older than the brides; the pictures that these men sent all too often showed them when they were much younger. Since it was a disgrace for an engaged woman to return to her home, many married the men who deceived them (A. Kim 1996:37,40). These women formed the first group of Korean women to immigrate to America (1910–24), and they later became known as picture brides.

The main motive for the picture brides to leave Korea was to escape the oppression of Confucian society. Confucianism taught that a woman is a creature born to obedience; she was to obey her father while at home, her husband when married and her son if widowed (Ching 1993:167). Female education was limited to feminine virtues and domestic skills; women had to remain in the home, and Confucian thought clearly dictated what a woman could or could not do. Furthermore, women were never given full rights as humans. In the Confucian ideal, women were to be passive, obedient, chaste and subordinate to men. Within the home, men retained all the significant rights and privileges, and the institutional suppression of women extended into the family itself. To attain virtue, women had to lead lives of complete self-sacrifice (Cho 1994:209) neglecting their own wishes and desires for the sake of the family. These women did not live for themselves but for men, children and the family, and thus could not separate their own identity from those of their husbands and children. It was this type of oppression that drove many young women to become picture brides and come to America for a better life.

An interview with an 87 year old picture bride reveals the oppressive state that women lived in and their deep desire to free themselves from such conditions. “Ah marriage! Then I could go to America! That land of freedom with streets paved of gold!... Since I became ten, I’ve been forbidden to step outside of my gates, just like all the rest of the girls of my days...becoming a picture bride, whatever that was, would be my answer and release” (A. Kim 1996:37,40). Many of these picture brides were assertive and decisive in character and will power. They were brave and ambitious, as they independently chose a new life that brought them to America. They seemed to have decided their own fate, since there is no evidence that their fathers (or brothers) sold them as “picture brides”. In their bravery and autonomy, they were quite different from their traditional or “ideal women” counterparts. They sought a new life and decided to risk their oppressive past and present for an unknown but hopeful future (A. Kim 1996:31).

The reality of immigrant life was quite different from what the picture brides anticipated. Their roles did become more diverse, and their status became relatively more equal to that of men. However, they still lived for others, mainly the family, and men continued to be the focus of their lives (A. Kim 1996:41). Even though these women came to America to escape the patriarchal structure of the traditional Korean family, it was inevitably transported. In the new land, however, they began to carry the burden both of household tasks and outside work. Picture brides were often overworked as they struggled to make their home in the new land a better place to live. Women were responsible for such normal household chores as cooking, cleaning, sewing and raising children. Immigration, however, also forced most women to come out of their homes in order to supplement their husbands' income. Most women worked in the sugarcane plantations alongside men (sixty five cents for men and fifty five cents for women a day) for an average of ten hours a day, six days a week. Sometimes they worked with babies strapped to their backs before returning home to fix supper. For years on end, many of these women survived with no more than four hours of sleep a night (M. Lee 1990:lvii).

On the plantations of Hawaii and on the farms of the Western U.S., Korean women cooked, washed and cleaned for family, and, for a fee, performed these chores for bachelors or married men who had come without their wives. This involved assuming even more work, such as washing and pressing the men's laundry and growing vegetables. Women who did laundry for a fee had to lug water from the well or the outdoor faucet, scrub the clothes on washboards, hang them out on lines to dry and iron them with irons heated on stoves. The work was demanding, but the income was better than laboring in the fields. In many families, such supplemental earnings made the difference between starvation and survival. Those who fed unattached men had to wake up at 3 or 4 a.m. to cook breakfast for as many as forty persons and to pack an equal number of lunch boxes in primitive kitchens (M. Lee 1990:lvi). Many of the couples operating such boarding houses managed to save money which they later used to set up small businesses in Honolulu and other urban areas. Here, women could contribute directly to the family income by working in the fields or operating the boarding houses (Yang 1987:169). It was a very burdensome lifestyle for these young women who left all that they had to live a more comfortable life abroad, only to discover that it was just as difficult, or more so, than their previous lifestyle in Korea.

Some of the hardships that the picture brides endured have been well recorded. One story about the Rev. Sin-Kyu Paik and his wife tells of their life with children and how they moved to Riverside to pick oranges. Living in a former chicken shack, the entire family survived on Mrs. Paik's earnings from cooking for Korean bachelors. One of the children recalled:

Although there were about ten families, there were a lot of bachelors. About thirty of them. Since we're poor, father got the idea that mother should cook for the bachelors. You know, that gives us food and a little money. So my poor mother had to cook for thirty to forty bachelors. Every morning she would get up at three or four o'clock and with the makeshift stove, cook for them. I always had to get up at three o'clock in the morning and help her pack the lunches (Sunoo 1982:97).

Mrs. Paik was a comparatively small woman. Yet she not only survived the ordeal but also gave birth to eight more children. These picture brides' perseverance, dedication, and their will to survive gave vitality and stability to their families and the community (Yang 1987:169). However, many of the hardships that the picture brides endured were repeated in the lives of many Korean women who immigrated during the third wave.¹

WOMEN'S ROLES TODAY: THE THIRD WAVE

The majority of contemporary Korean immigrant women were married when they came to North America. They came in order to improve their life conditions, but more particularly to advance their husbands' careers and to provide their children with a Western education. Their measure of a good life was centered on the success of their husbands and children. Many women supported their husbands and families while their husbands studied (A. Kim 1996:62). For these family-oriented women, immigrant life has proved to be very harsh.

While all Korean immigrants in North America are weighed down with multiple responsibilities, women immigrants bear the heaviest burden of all.

1. The remainder of this essay will focus on women who immigrated during the third wave, whose thoughts and experiences will be reflected in the following theological and christological discussion.

They suffer the disabilities faced by all immigrants, and they also suffer the handicaps experienced by most women. They work outside of the home, but instead of generally finding careers that offer self-actualization and identity in work, Korean North American women more often work in factories or manual labor related jobs (Paik 1991:259). This is despite the fact that some of these women are very well qualified workers with credible degrees or other qualifications. The problem they face is that many employers are seeking North American experience, and thus do not count the numerous and valuable Asian work experiences that these women may have. A young second generation Korean-Canadian woman recounts the struggle of her own mother, Young Ju Park Kim, in finding employment.

However, in my mother's situation, coming to Canada meant a drop in her class status. In Korea and in Hong Kong, my mother had been an art teacher and was pursuing her career and passion for art. However, in Canada, she no longer worked in a profession, but found herself in a factory job. Even getting this factory job was a feat in itself. Because of systemic discrimination, such as the requirement for "Canadian experience only," my mother's many years of teaching experience (over ten years) were seen as insufficient credentials for Canadian employment (Z. Kim 1997:32).

Korean North American women must contend with both societal discrimination towards women and male domination within the immigrant community. As a consequence, these immigrant women have been among the lowest paid and most oppressed of workers (Bonacich, et. al 1987:221,233).

Korean North American women often work more hours than men, and in spite of their full-time employment, they are expected to perform all the family tasks. They carry the burden of performing the traditional household tasks, as well as bearing and raising children. Immigrants are still influenced by the Confucian philosophy that women are born to be sacrificial, submissive, and devoted servants to their husbands and children. Thus they have a lifetime commitment to lengthy child-bearing and child-rearing, which deprives them of their own independent life, identity, and voice. Instead, women's lives, identities and voices are extensions of their families' life, identity and voice. As much as they might like to deny it, many immigrant women's roles are still defined and determined by the Confucian society of their homeland (H. Lee 1994:6,9). Young Ju Park Kim recounts her painful

story to her daughter of not being able to pursue her dreams, for the sake of her family.

The pressures were so hard that tears would just come streaming down my face. I cried a lot. For fifteen years, I completely forgot about my art and drawing. When we first came, doing artwork was an impossibility. So, I had a lot of stress. Your dad would always say to me, ‘honey, by constantly thinking about life, it becomes difficult. Just forget everything and live—eat, sleep, work, raise children—don’t think about your artwork or anything.’ That sounded okay to me, so until you were in middle school, I didn’t do anything. Then when you were in grade six, I began my artwork for the first time (Z. Kim 1997:32).

There are countless numbers of immigrant women who have gone through similar sacrifices for their families; they have sacrificed their personal goals and aspirations and have instead become workers and helpers for men.

The double burden that many women immigrants face involves a great deal of stress and sacrifice. For these women, social adaptation is hard, as they came from a country where they were largely confined to their homes and discouraged from engaging with the outside world. Though Korean North American women can function in the public sphere, they seldom interact with the larger society (M. Lee 1990:lix). They remain isolated from society and stay within their own ethnic group. These women also suffer an extra psychological burden through their negative self-image; they tend to blame themselves for any upset experience in a domestic environment and attribute the difficulty to their own failure to fulfill their “womanly” role (Y. Kim 1991:266). Thus Korean North American immigrant women live with much anguish, pain, sorrow and *han*. Their personal desire to escape oppressive elements of Confucian culture was not fulfilled, as those elements also immigrated with them.

THE ROLE OF THE IMMIGRANT CHURCH

For many of these women, the immigrant church is a major institution in their lives. The historical establishment of Korean-American churches in the United States began with four churches during the first wave of immigration: the Hawaii Methodist Church (established in 1903), San Francisco Korean Methodist Church (1904), Hawaii Korean Anglican Church (1905), and the

Los Angeles Presbyterian Church (1905). By 1967, there were thirty Korean-American churches, growing to three thousand by 1989 (J. Kim 1997:7). Many immigrants go to church: in 1986, 79–80 percent of Korean immigrants were affiliated with Korean churches, compared to a church membership rate of 15–18 percent in Korea. Of these church attendants, 40 percent became Christians after immigrating to the United States (A. Kim 1996:67).

The churches have proven to be an extremely important community for immigrants, with four major sociological functions. First, the churches provide fellowship for Korean immigrants and serve as social centers for meeting people and making friends. The churches represent a group tie that is lacking in the larger community, as they bring together people with common experiences, sufferings and goals. They help immigrants adjust to the host society by giving valuable social services and information. The churches also become a means of identifying with and gaining foreign protection, as adherence to Christianity has been a means of gaining sympathy from the white community (Kitano & Daniels 1988:122). Second, the churches serve as centers of education—of Korean as well as English language, of North American culture as well as biblical knowledge, and as centers of activism for early immigrant women. Third, churches confer social status and positions of leadership upon adult members. This is important for men as it gives them leadership roles which are difficult to obtain within the dominant society. Many men are able to exercise their power and authority within the church, which gives them a certain status within the community. Fourth, the churches reflect the traditional Confucian Korean cultural/social structure and system. Churches have offered a vehicle for “Americanization and also offered sites for cultural preservation and elaboration” (J. Kim 1997:15). They are a place where people can come together and reinforce their ethnic identity. Churches strengthen the Korean identity of immigrants by maintaining Korean cultural traditions (A. Kim 1996:67).

These churches fulfill many of the social and psychological needs of immigrants. However, the churches also help perpetuate the suffering of women by restricting their roles and participation. For women in the immigrant community, these churches have also been, in many ways, a source of domination and oppression.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

The Korean North American church predominantly reflects the characteristics of traditional Korean culture: conservative, hierarchical, and male-dominated. Most senior ministers were trained in Korea, and tend to hold old-country values in which traditional sex-role differentiation is clearly marked and practiced within the church. Ministers are almost all male, as are most elders and ordained deacons. Church committees are chaired by either a male elder or ordained deacon, and other important decision-making positions of the church are largely filled by men. Women rarely get these positions as they can only become lay deacons, whose main concerns are service and mission work. There is, however, an honorary position reserved for experienced church women called *kwonsa*. *Kwonsa* do not hold any decision-making power in the church, and this is basically a position for elderly women who cannot be ordained elders (Yu 1987:289–90) due to their gender.

Women's leadership or authority has not been accepted in the Korean immigrant churches during most of the twentieth century, and the roles women have been allowed to play are largely as assistants to men. Hence, women's roles and status in the churches have been akin to those they played within Confucianism and Yi dynasty society back in Korea. In the modern Korean Christian church, women lack positions of leadership within the church even though they comprise the majority of the church membership. Women are excluded from many important roles but are allowed to serve as invisible helpers behind the scene (A. Kim 1996:52). They are mainly relegated to kitchen related services in the church, which means that churchwomen repeat the daily routines of housework when they go to church on Sundays. Therefore, in many respects, the Korean North American church systematically justifies the devaluation and subordination of women (J. Kim 1997:135) as the church continues to be ruled by Confucian and patriarchal Christian notions of gender hierarchy, and replicates the cultural standards established back in Korea.

Most Korean North American women in the churches accept and adjust to this Korean-Christian social environment. In such cases, the Christian God is seen as legitimating female inferiority and shapes women's rationalization into a process of accepting the given social reality. In accepting this, Korean immigrant women, regardless of professional or religious background, generally subscribe to a sexist anthropomorphic understanding of God. They try to live out their Christianity in accordance with the elements

of Korean culture which dictate that women are, or should be, inferior to men by nature and social function. In doing this, many Korean North American Christian women accept and legitimate their patriarchal society and the status quo religious realities (A. Kim 1996:91,94).

In many ways, Korean Christianity in the immigrant church communities has become detrimental to those women who want to develop their own potential as persons and want to improve their roles and status through formal education. Consequently, those women who view themselves as “good Christians” must develop double selves in order to fit into two social environments, the church and the world outside the church. The Korean Christian culture in North America seems to perpetuate the image of women as an appendices to men (A. Kim 1996:368). Despite all these negative consequences for women, women still attend and are attached to the church:

WOMEN’S IDENTITY AND MARGINALIZATION

Korean North American women are caught between two cultural ideologies: Korean values and North American values. Korean values tend to ask women to be submissive, passive and pessimistic, while Western values foster and demand, increasingly, individualism and assertiveness. For Korean immigrant women, the encounter with the North American feminist movement is a special source of identity disturbance. Korean culture demands conformity and obedience to family needs and societal norms, while the West admires individualism and personal success. In Korea, women were constantly told to obey men and then, when they immigrate to this new land, they are told to think for themselves and make decisions on their own without necessarily asking the advice of men. They also face the conflict of collective (familial) and individual interests. In their new setting they do not necessarily have to always look out for the family, but can indeed take care of themselves (Chow 1989:368). Korean North American women feel pressure to preserve their Korean cultural heritage, yet know that they must also assimilate themselves into Western sociocultural realities in order to survive.

Women who grew up in Korea never had the opportunity to fully develop as authentic human beings with a true sense of self-worth. After immigration, their new environment prompts them to search for the self-realization and self-fulfillment they could not find in their childhood and youth. Their old-country self-image and self-identity do not fit in with contemporary North American society. Therefore there is a sharp contrast between the tra-

ditional Korean women's role demanded of them at home and the contemporary Western image of womanhood portrayed in North American media and culture. Establishing a strong self-identity is crucial for Korean North American women who have experienced cultural and ideological transition and must survive as members of a doubly marginalized group (i.e., both female and Asian) (I. Lee 1993:190-3). They do not belong in the dominant culture, nor in their homeland's culture, but are left in the margins. Korean North American women become separated from their native country and culture and, unable to melt into the dominant group, thus perceive themselves as "marginalized".

Marginalized people are "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arranged by law, custom, convention and ceremony." They stand on the borders of two cultural worlds but are not fully members of either. They straddle two societies, as they are not completely accepted by the majority group in society (K. Kim 1997:16). A part of these women longs for solidarity with their Korean heritage, and yet another demands a just place in the larger North American society, where many are still treated as strangers (Matsuoka 1995:1). They identify with, or have internalized, the norms and ideals of the dominant group, but are rejected by that group. In this sense, they are not only in between or "on the boundary" but also "outside or at the periphery of" the main group of society. The more they identify with the main group, the more they feel marginalized. They are left more in between and also more rejected (S. Lee 1987:92).

Many believe that Korean North American women (and immigrants in general) do not necessarily have to remain in the margins but can easily assimilate into the dominant culture. Yet this is a false notion, as the theory of the assimilation of different races does not work in North America. The total assimilation of racial groups in North America has been depicted by the image of a melting pot. However, this idea of total assimilation came to be a realistic dream only for those of homogenous national groups from the European continent, and not for those who came from different shores. As Frank Ichistita argues, "it seems to me that the melting-pot concept was valid only if one was white. Blacks were kept out entirely and other non-whites were invited in gingerly so as not to disturb the basic mix" (J. Lee 1995:37). This melting pot model cannot work for all minorities unless wholesale interracial marriages occur in North America, as was once suggested by Arnold Toynbee, a British historian. As long as there are differences in outward appearance, people tend to be categorized and classified according to

skin color and physical characteristics (G. Kim 1996:205). This is why Korean immigrant women cannot fully assimilate into the main culture. They are a visible minority because of their different skin color. They continue to feel like outsiders. They are also unable to assimilate well with the dominant culture because of their lack of English language skills, as well as the lack of time to develop new friendships or relationships outside their Korean community.

Korean North American women feel a great deal of alienation and loneliness. In addition to being members of a marginalized Asian North American subculture that functions with rules the majority does not live by, women often experience the frustration of not having their experience recognized, validated and supported by men within their own ethnic communities. Thus they are doubly alienated (Matsuoka 1995:73–4): they experience alienation from within their ethnic community and from the broader North American culture (J. Kim 1997:93,97). These women's experiences are limited and constrained to a small, stifling ethnocentric circle.

Furthermore, just as in Korea, a person's identity in this ethnic circle is not defined only by themselves but by others around them, especially family members. Although transplanted to North American soil, Korean North American women's expressions of individuality lack the marks of individuality of the dominant North American culture. Rather, the Confucian identity of a woman is transferred to North America. For example, all women are addressed in terms of their family relationships (or lack thereof). If married, her full name becomes obsolete and people call her "Mrs." or "so-and-so's wife" or "*seh-sek-shi*" (a newlywed bride). If a woman has a child or children, she is referred to as the mother of her firstborn within the ethnic community. The only time a woman's full name is recognized and used is when she is relatively young and unmarried (approximately twenty-five years and younger). After a certain age, understood as marriageable age, an unmarried woman's name becomes obsolete and she is recognized as a "*no-chea-nyeu*" (old maid) (J. Kim 1997:16). "*No-chea-nyeu*" is not a favorable or honorable name but is a pejorative term. It has negative connotations, as the Korean North American culture still maintains that every woman should be married by a certain age. An unmarried woman is still looked down upon and despised, just as she was during the Confucian era. Thus the deep desire of these women to escape Confucianism is forsaken, as the burdens and limitations of Confucian philosophy are still visible within home, church and work, and indeed are seen as legitimized also by Christianity and its Bible. As an added burden, these women now have to deal with racism in their new culture. There-

fore, Korean North American women are not able to release their *han* through their immigrant life but still bear it, and continue to accumulate more.

HAN AND THE NEED FOR NEW THEOLOGY

As detailed above, Korean North American women experience burdens that come with adopting a new land. There are double roles that they must adjust to and accept. They live in a land where they are marginalized and often experience racism; they also lose their own individual identity and are referred to by their marriage status in their own community. They become invisible and silenced just as they were in their own homeland. Their thoughts do not seem to warrant any hearing and their identity is lost in the tradition that brought them to the new land. They continue to live and experience *han*, which will always be with them unless they find new ways to release it. Just as for women living in Korea, there are not that many channels for Korean North American women to eliminate their *han*.

In many ways, these women live a life of exile in this new land. They are like the Biblical image of Hagar, as many came not by their own choice, but by someone else's decision and for someone else's sake. Many live in anguish worrying about their children, and many live with a sense of alienation and confusion. The ideal images of Korean women are of submissiveness and self-sacrifice, and these images leave defenseless victims helpless. These women's sense of wandering in the wilderness differs from that of men in the immigrant community, as women's exile is more of a circumstantial, forced exile rather than a voluntary flight. Their degree of uncertainty and lack of personal direction is greater than that of the men in their culture. Immigrant women are often not able to pursue their own interests or professional ambition, but have to work for family members in low-paying and, often to their minds, degrading jobs, such as cleaning and other manual work. This far-away-from-home wilderness often presents problems with their children, which are more than the women can handle. Overwhelmed by a sense of alienation and oppression, these women find themselves needing a workable theology and spiritual guidance for survival and to release their accumulated *han* (I. Lee 1994:24).

Since many of these immigrant women are Christians, they turn to Christianity to find a way to release their *han*. Often, the church is viewed as a channel of release. The marginalized existence of these women determines the very character and function of their churches as "communitas" (J. Kim

1997:16), making the church so important to these women. Even though the church itself is patriarchal, the church is where women can gather together with others of similar interests, backgrounds and problems. These women look forward to church and try to find some consolation at church for all the burdens and problems that they are experiencing. However, the church has not advanced greatly beyond that of the Yi dynasty in its social treatment and placement of women. In line with Confucian thought, Korean North American Christian women continue to exist for others and keep the rule of obeying men. They obey, follow and provide for the various needs of their ministers “as to the Lord”. They deny and sacrifice themselves by carrying others’ crosses as their own. They believe that there is nothing that they can look forward to in this life, for their reward will be purely spiritual (J. Kim. 1997:87). Women are taught to suffer and endure in this world, for a better life to come after death. However, they need not continue to live their lives like this.

One of the major tasks for Korean North American women doing theology is to release their *han*. Therefore it is crucial to understand the context of Korean North American immigrant women in order to shape and develop a theology relevant for them. As described above, Korean immigrant women have endured many hardships and trials since the beginning of the history of immigration. Due to the strong influence of Confucianism within the immigrant community and racism in the dominant society, these women have experienced oppression from both cultural worlds. Through their struggles of trying to live in between two worlds, they have accumulated much *han*. Even the church, which has patriarchal structures, has been a source of oppression and *han* for these women. Korean North American women do not have many channels to release their *han*, and as mainly Christian women, they are seeking ways within Christianity to eliminate it. Since Christ is central to Christianity, some Korean North American theologians are searching for a new image and understanding of Jesus who will save them and release their *han*.

One image proposed by Korean women is that of Jesus as a shaman priest. Jesus cried out for the pain of suffering humanity and shamans do likewise for the suffering Korean people. Shamans comfort the *han*-ridden *minjung*,²

2. In Korea, the suffering people are called *minjung*, which means “people”. Specifically, *minjung* are “the oppressed, exploited, dominated, discriminated against, alienated and suppressed politically, economically, socially, culturally and

and, similarly, Jesus comforts the *han*-ridden people. For Korean women, salvation or redemption means being exorcised from their accumulated *han*, and an untangling of their many-layered *han* which can be achieved through a shaman. Therefore, Korean women can easily link the Jesus of the New Testament, who also exorcised the possessed and healed the sick, with their shaman priest. The Korean shaman has been a healer, comforter and counselor for Korean women just as Jesus Christ healed and comforted women in his ministry (Chung 1990b:66).

CONCLUSION

The traditional images of Jesus are being interpreted in fresh and creative ways by Korean women. If Jesus Christ is to make any sense to Korean women, then Jesus Christ must be an exorcist of their *han* and be a “priest of *han*.” Since most shamans are women, many Korean women connect with a female image of Jesus more than the male. For Korean women, Jesus can no longer be a white man in Jewish clothes, but a Korean woman shaman priest who releases their *han*.

This image of Jesus works well for many Korean women. It does not, however, resonate well with Korean North American women, most of whom have not directly inherited this shamanistic tradition. Many are unaware and ignorant of shamanic practices, and even see them as being evil. Korean North American women do not want to embrace something which is not entirely

intellectually, like women, ethnic groups, the poor, workers and farmers, including intellectuals themselves” (Chung 1990b:30). The *minjung* are *han*-ridden people.

Minjung theologians try to articulate a theology out of the concrete historical experience of the Korean *minjung*. There are many *minjung* in Korea and women comprise the majority. Women have the most *han* because of Confucianism’s strict imposition of laws and customs discriminating against women (N. Suh:58). Furthermore, they do not have the public channels that men have to express their *han*, and this has developed a sense of impossibility in their lives. Enclosed within the home to take care of the family and household, women are discouraged from taking on leadership positions in society and play only a minimal public role in society (Chung 1990b:39).

However, *Minjung* theology is a liberation theology which arises specifically out of the Korean context. Since this essay is dealing with the context of Korean North American women, *minjung* theology does not directly apply to these women and will not be further addressed.

authentic to their bisocial being and bicultural tradition. Neither can these women accept the white male savior that Western society has been perpetuating for the last two thousand years, as they cannot identify with this white Jesus. Furthermore, the images of Jesus that some white feminist theologians are proposing do not resonate very well with Korean North American women, whose experiences and context are very different from those of white women.

Korean North American immigrant women are torn between two cultures as they try to embrace both cultures and live by them both. One key to resolving such a tension between two cultures is to maintain a bicultural existence, through selecting appropriate elements of both cultural worlds to make the best adaptation according to the demands of social circumstances (Chow 1989:368). However, as detailed above, Korean North American women often become pushed to the margins as they try to maintain a bicultural existence which will satisfy both cultures. Instead, the decision to use one culture over the other should not be a question of which culture is better than the other, but rather should involve selecting what is good from both cultures. Similarly, for Korean North American women, the image of a Jesus who will release them of their pain, sorrow and *han* should be retrieved from both worlds. This theological task will be an exciting and important endeavor as many Korean immigrant women in North America continue to search for new ways of understanding Jesus.

REFERENCES

- Bonacich, Edna, Mokerrom Hossain, and Jae-hong Park
 1987 "Korean Immigrant Working Women in the Early 1980's." In *Korean Women in Transition: At Home and Abroad*, ed. by Eui-Young Yu and Earl H. Phillips, 219-47. Los Angeles: Center for Korean-American and Korean Studies, California State University.
- Ching, Julia
 1993 *Chinese Religions*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Chung, Hyun Kyung

- 1990a "Han-Pu-Ri: Doing Theology from Korean Women's Perspective." In *We Dare to Dream*, ed. by Virginia Fabella and Sun-Ai Lee, 135-46. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- 1990b *Struggle to Be the Sun Again*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Cho, Kyung Won

- 1994 "Overcoming Confucian Barriers: Changing Educational Opportunities for Women in Korea." In *Women of Japan & Korea: Continuity and Change*, ed. by Joyce Gelb and Marian Lief Palley, 206-22. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Choy, Bong-Youn

- 1979 *Koreans in America*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall Inc.

Chow, Esther Ngan-Ling

- 1989 "The Feminist Movement: Where are all the Asian American Women?" In *Making Waves: An Anthology of Writings By and About Asian American Women*, ed. by Asian Women United of California, 362-77. Boston: Beacon Press.

Kim, Ai Ra

- 1996 *Women's Struggle for a New Life*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Kim, Grace Sangok

- 1996 "Asian North American Youth: A Ministry of Self-Identity and Pastoral Care." In *People on the Way*, ed. by David Ng, 201-27. Valley Forge: Judson Press.

Kim, Jung Ha

- 1997 *Bridge-Makers and Cross-Bearers: Korean-American Women and the Church*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Kim, Zestaline

- 1997 *Korean-Canadian Women: Voices of First Generation*. Women's Studies Thesis, MacMaster University, Canada.

Kitano, Harry H.L. and Roger Daniels

- 1988 *Asian Americans: Emerging Minorities*. Second Edition. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Lee, Hwain Chang

- 1994 *Confucius, Christ & Co-Partnership*. Maryland: University Press of America Inc.

- Lee, Inn Sook
1993 "Korean American Women and Ethnic Identity." In *Korean-American Ministry: A Resource Book*, ed. by Sang Hyun Lee and John V. Moore, 190–3. Louisville, KY: General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- 1994 "An Exilic Journey: Toward Womanist Theology from Korean Immigrant Women's Perspectives." In *Sisters Struggling in the Spirit: A Women of Color Theological Anthology*, ed. by Nantawan Boonprasat Lewis, Lydia Hernandez, Helen Locklear, and Robina Marie Winbush, 23–30. Louisville, KY: Women's Ministries Program Area, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- Lee, Jung Young
1995 *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Lee, Mary Paik
1990 *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in America*. Ed. by Sucheng Chan. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Lee, Sang Hyun
1987 "Called to Be Pilgrims: Toward an Asian-American Theology From the Korean Immigrant Perspective." In *Korean American Ministry*, ed. by Sang Hyun Lee, 90–120. Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- Matsuoka, Fumitaka
1995 *Out of Silence: Emerging Themes in Asian American Churches*. Ohio: United Church Press.
- Paik, Sook Ja
1997 "Korean-American Women's Underemployment and Dual Labour Burden." In *The Korean-American Community: Present and Future*, ed. by Tae-Hwan Kwak and Seong Hyong Lee, 251–64. Seoul, Korea: Kyungnam University Press.
- Sunoo, Sonia Shinn
1982 *Korea Kaleidoscope*. Davis, CA: Korean Oral History Project, Sierra Mission Area, United Presbyterian Church, USA.
- Suh, Nam-Dong
1981 "Towards a Theology of Han." In *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, ed. by the Commission on Theo-

logical Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (CTC-CCA), 51–66. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Suh, Kwang-Sun David

1981 “A Biographical Sketch of an Asian Theology Consultation.” In *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, ed. by the Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (CTC-CCA), pp. 17–40. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Yang, Eun Sik

1987 “Korean Women in American: 1903–1930.” In *Korean Women in Transition: At Home and Abroad*, ed. by Eui-Young Yu and Earl H. Phillips, 167–81. Los Angeles: Center for Korean-American and Korean Studies, California State University.

Yu, Eui-Young

1987 “The Activities of Women in Southern California Korean Community Organizations.” In *Korean Women in Transition: At Home and Abroad*, ed. by Eui-Young Yu and Earl H. Phillips, 275–99. Los Angeles: Center for Korean-American and Korean Studies, California State University.

Beyond Narrative Theology

John Milbank and Gerhard Loughlin as the Non-Identical Repetition of Hans Frei

ALEX HAWKINS

WHERE CAN ONE GO TO FIND NARRATIVE THEOLOGY TODAY? ARE THERE two narrative theologies, which are to be found in New Haven and Chicago, respectively? Or has narrative theology made its rejection of secular reason explicit and taken up residence in Cambridge, England? Or again, has narrative theology ceased to exist as a distinct mode of doing theology? The answer to these questions is far from clear and depends, of course, upon what one understands narrative theology to be. One's understanding of narrative theology depends, in turn, upon what narrative one regards as an adequate account of the developments in theology over the last twenty-five years.

In an important new book, *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology*, Gerhard Loughlin provides an account of narrative theology which addresses these questions. He identifies narrative theology as the rejection of every foundation other than "the community that tells the story by which it is told," and regards Hans Frei, George Lindbeck, and John Milbank as its primary advocates. Loughlin's definition of narrative theology supports the claim that the clearest development of narrative theology today is to be found neither in New Haven nor Chicago, but in Cambridge, England, where it is being non-identically repeated by John Milbank.

In this paper I shall argue in favor of Loughlin's identification of John Milbank's "Postmodern Critical Augustinianism" (Milbank 1991) as the most significant contemporary non-identical repetition of the narrative theology of Frei. However, this will not be an uncritical affirmation of Loughlin's work; for, I shall also argue that the continuity between Frei and Milbank is problematized by Loughlin's characterization of narrative theology as the re-

jection of every foundation other than the community that tells the story by which it is told. If narrative theology is defined according to that emphasis upon the mutual constitution of the church and scripture, then Frei does not qualify as a narrative theologian. For, although that account of narrative theology nicely summarizes Milbank's position, the continued influence of New Criticism upon Frei's thought disallows that description as an adequate designation of Frei's work. Although Frei, in his later work, replaces an appeal to the text in itself with an appeal to the church's practice of reading scripture for the literal sense, New Criticism continues to influence the way in which he understands the Reformed practice of reading scripture. As a result, an important discontinuity between Frei and Milbank arises precisely at the point that Loughlin wants to make central to narrative theology, on the issue of how to understand both the constitution of the text and the church's practice of reading. Because Loughlin defines narrative theology by its position on the mutual constitution of the church and scripture, he fails to address the discontinuity between Frei and Milbank adequately.

It is not being suggested that Loughlin is unaware of this discontinuity between Frei on the one hand and Milbank and himself on the other hand. In fact Loughlin acknowledges that his reading of narrative theology extends beyond what Frei himself explicitly developed (Loughlin 36, 41, 155–6). However, he does not adequately address the potential discontinuity between Frei and Milbank that this qualification introduces. If he were to explicate that discontinuity further, it appears that his account of narrative theology could only allow him to say that in Frei's understanding of this central feature of narrative theology, Frei was simply mistaken. Yet, that conclusion would obviously raise a question regarding the legitimacy of tracing narrative theology to the work of Frei. This suggests that in order to appeal to both Frei and Milbank as narrative theologians, another theme needs to be marked as central to the continuity between them. Therefore, in what follows I shall offer an account of narrative theology that defines the opposition to the self-positioning, mentalist subject as the primary concern of narrative theology. In this way, the discontinuity with regard to the reading and understanding of texts that is found in Frei and Milbank is positioned by the more dominant continuity that is located in their common opposition to the self-positioning, mentalist subject of modernity.

As the central feature of my account of narrative theology, I shall offer a reading of Frei's work as an essentially negative project aimed at countering the autonomous, disembodied, mentalist-individualist, self-positioning sub-

ject of modernity.¹ I shall focus my reading of Frei on his discussion of narrative realism; and argue that Frei deploys narrative realism for the purpose of opposing understandings of the task of theology that are implicated in the modern prioritization of an inner, self-positioning subject. This negative characterization of Frei's project is not intended to deny Frei's positive concern for the practices of the church, especially the practice of reading scripture for the literal sense. However, Frei does not believe that those positive and constructive practices are necessarily dependent upon an adequate theorization of how understanding takes place within them. As a result, in his own reflections on the level of theory, admittedly a level that is never separate from practice, Frei devotes very little space to positively stated conceptualizations of a narrative realist reading of scripture, the constitution of scripture, an account of truth, or the way to do theology in a manner that is compatible with a narrative realist reading practice. Overwhelmingly, Frei's theoretical reflections identify ways of understanding the task of theology that must be displaced by the church's narrative realist practice of reading the Bible for the literal sense. If this reading of Frei's work as primarily an opposition to an inner, self-positioning subject is accepted, then Milbank's strong rejection of those same opponents warrants reading Milbank's "Postmodern Critical Augustinianism" as a non-identical repetition of Frei's more Barthian narrative theology. Further, this reading of Frei and narrative theology enables one to defend that continuity between Frei and Milbank even as one recognizes the discontinuity between them on their understandings of the constitution of the text and the church's reading practices.

In the conclusion of this paper I shall examine more closely the question of the constitution of the text over which I understand Frei and Milbank to disagree. Although Frei's work contains a Reformed insight that Milbank's work needs to keep before itself, I shall agree with Loughlin that ultimately narrative theology's opposition to the self-positioning subject and Frei's recognition of the importance of the reading practices of the church should lead to a church poetics within which the mutual constitution of the church and scripture is recognized. As has already been suggested, I regard that conclusion as discontinuous with Frei's own reflections. Although Frei rightly identifies the opponents of narrative theology, he fails to provide an adequate positive account of the Christian practice of reading the Bible. Nevertheless,

1. This account of Frei's project clearly assumes a significant parallel between Frei and Fergus Kerr's *Theology After Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

I regard my affirmation of Loughlin and Milbank on the constitution of the text as in continuity with Frei not only with regard to its opposition to the self-positioning subject but also in its deference to actuality over possibility and to the practices of the church over theoretical speculation. Thus, I shall argue that the church poetics of Milbank and Loughlin should be commended because it provides a better account of the actual practice of the church's reading of scripture. Using the terms of Milbank's discussion of the justification of doctrine, one could say that I am arguing that Milbank and Loughlin's reflections on the constitution of the text and the church's practice of reading is better able to redouble the force which it gives to existing Christian practice and to provide a more inherently attractive picture of God (Milbank 1990:384). Yet, regardless of one's verdict on what position to take with respect to the discontinuity between Frei and Milbank on the question of the constitution of scripture, the alternative reading of the central aim of Frei's work that I shall develop in the central portion of this paper enables one to recognize and negotiate that discontinuity without detracting from one's argument for a clear continuity between Frei and Milbank, a continuity which should be central to an account of narrative theology as it has developed from Frei to Milbank.

LOUGHLIN'S EUCHARISTIC READING OF NARRATIVE THEOLOGY

Before turning my attention to Frei's work, I shall first provide a further description of Loughlin's account of narrative theology as well as note the continued need for reflection on the nature of narrative theology. Thus, I shall further indicate the dominant themes in Milbank and Loughlin which call into question any simple claim of continuity between their work and that of Frei.

Loughlin concludes *Telling God's Story* with a discussion of the Eucharist and an argument for the image of John's eating of the book as a figure for narrativist theology. With that image Loughlin seeks to transform Erich Auerbach's image of the biblical text as a consuming text which seeks to overcome our reality, an image that remained central for Frei (Frei 1974:3). Rather than speak of the text consuming the world, Loughlin speaks of disciples who consume the text: "We are not so much enjoined to get inside the text, as to let the text get inside us, so that we are nourished by its word and enabled to perform its story" (Loughlin 139). With that transformation of

Auerbach's imagery Loughlin emphasizes the mutual constitution of the church and scripture in a manner that raises ecclesiology to a more prominent place than it occupies in Frei's thought. As a result, Loughlin is able to affirm that "[t]he Church is shaped by a story that is even now being told. It is shaped within a story that it has also shaped and is shaping: the story of the body of Christ" (86). Yet, by wedding the adequacy of the text's witness to the church in this manner Loughlin oversteps Frei's more Reformed sensibilities. This is not to say that Frei is unconcerned for the church, even if his primary expressions of concern for the practices of the church relate to its reading of scripture. But, even in Frei's later work, when he acknowledges that New Criticism cannot be defended as a general theory of interpretation, New Critical practices of reading continue to exercise a significant influence on his understanding of the church's practice of reading the Bible for its literal sense in a manner that, contrary to Milbank and Loughlin, downplays the ecclesiological component of the constitution of the Bible and the church's practice of reading.

Returning to Loughlin, it should again be stated that his emphasis upon the mutual constitution of the church and scripture is continuous with Milbank's work. Both Milbank's appropriation of Kenneth Surin's idea of a "church poetics"² (Milbank 1990:387) and Milbank's christology are continuous with Loughlin's affirmation that theology has no foundation other than the community that tells the story by which it is told. Loughlin is correct in citing Milbank's exposition of an "ecclesiological construal of Christ's divine personhood, which regards Christ as having arrived only in terms of his final, eschatological arrival which is yet to come" as the proper extension of Loughlin's own reading of narrative theology (Milbank 1997:159). Milbank's ecclesiological understanding of the constitution of scripture is also evidenced in *Theology and Social Theory*, where he suggests an even more Trinitarian development of this position.

Despite this continuity between Loughlin and Milbank, and their common affirmation of the mutual constitution of the church and scripture, the question of the discontinuity between both of them and Frei remains. As has already been stated, I shall address that question of discontinuity in what follows by offering a reading of Frei as an opposition to a self-present, self-positioning subject. Yet, because this is to be the focus of my reading of Frei,

2. To see the way in which Surin develops the position that Milbank draws upon see "The Weight of Weakness: Intertextuality and Discipleship" in Surin 201–21.

I should mention that in order to defend that this is continuous with the work of Milbank and Loughlin, I am assuming that when they argue for the mutual constitution of the church and scripture, they are not reintroducing the self-positioning, self-present subject into their work. I shall, however, reserve my defense of this claim until the conclusion of this paper, after I have developed my reading of Frei.

NARRATIVE THEOLOGY'S CONTESTED STATUS

Frei's narrative theology stands in need of further explication not only in light of Loughlin's attempt to claim a continuity between Frei and Milbank but also in light of the continually contested nature of the term narrative theology. In order to locate my own reading of Frei I shall first indicate something of the character of the disputes surrounding narrative theology.

Throughout narrative theology's short history, it has never been clear who should be regarded as a narrative theologian or what should be regarded as distinctive about the work of narrative theologians. Those outside the fold have been quite critical of the lack of clarity that has often flourished in its name. William J. Abraham expresses the bewilderment over the significance of narrative theology that many outsiders feel when he criticizes the "Yale School" for its "systematic cultivation of studied obscurantism" (Abraham 1990:19). However, the confusion surrounding the term narrative theology has not been confined to those outside the circle of narrative theologians. Frei, the theologian most commonly identified with it, repeatedly expresses his own discomfort with the descriptive phrase "narrative theology," and distances himself from it by employing rhetorical phrases such as "if there is a 'narrative theology'" (Frei 1993:112).

In addition to the contested nature of the phrase narrative theology the theology that goes by the name of narrative has also always been plagued by the suspicion that it may be little more than a passing "fad" or "minor will-o'-the-wisp" (Frei 1993:148). Despite the significant place that narratives play in the theology of William Placher and James McClendon, the present state of theology appears to confirm that as a comprehensive account of the task of theology, it was only a passing fad, perhaps destined to have been displaced by postmodern theology, which in its worst moments is also little more than the latest fad. Of course, most of those who were accused of being narrative theologians would strongly oppose the suggestion that they were attempting to, or would ever desire to, develop a comprehensive account

of the task of theology. Frei is especially adamant in his refusal of every general and comprehensive theory of knowledge or theological method. Therefore, he repeatedly returns to the Barthian mantras that possibility only follows actuality and that theology must give primacy to description rather than to explanation (Frei 1992:12–3, 81, 86–7, 90). Nevertheless, even as a description of a less ambitious project, the phrase “narrative theology” appears to have lost much of the importance that it only recently had.

Despite these cautionary remarks concerning the passing significance of narrative theology and the potential ambiguity that can result from wedding oneself too closely to that phrase as the primary descriptor of a theology for the contemporary church, I shall continue in the tradition of those who have attempted to clarify the defining characteristics of narrative theology. My reason for doing so is based upon the claim that if Milbank’s work is continuous with narrative theology, then narrative theology’s continued relevance can be vigorously affirmed even as its content might be examined anew from the more comprehensively developed perspective of Milbank’s “Postmodern Critical Augustinianism.” Therefore, I turn now to a reading of Frei’s work which can serve as the basis for the argument of continuity between Frei and Milbank.

NARRATIVE REALISM IN FREI’S EARLY WORK

Frei’s Opponents

Frei’s work is defined in the first instance by its opposition to the self-positioning, inner subject, and then secondarily to every theoretical construct that presupposes that subject. As a result, Frei appeals to narrative realism as a means of rejecting not only antirealists and empiricist realists, both of which are only made intelligible in light of a self-positioning subject, but also as a means of countering the preeminence of the subject-object schema, modern understandings of freedom as the subject’s construction of some kind of affinity between otherwise alienated subjective and objective realms, and history as distinct from providence and as the embodiment of the realization of subjective freedom. Along the way, historical-critical and existential-phenomenological approaches to the Bible are also criticized by Frei because of their continued allegiance to the primacy of a self-positioning present subject. It is, however, a mistake to see those two groups as the definitive targets of Frei’s critical relation to contemporary theology. They are merely incidental casualties of Frei’s assault on every construction of knowl-

edge that presupposes the primacy of the modern subject. For it is only insofar as historical-critics and hermeneuticians further any of the above mentioned faulty theoretical constructs, and for Frei they both do, that they are to be criticized. It should also be noted, however, that Frei's criticism of theological methods is not limited to historical-critics or hermeneuticians, but extends to any practice of understanding which incorporates and extends empiricism, anti-realism, or any other derivative of the modern subject and the preeminent subject-object schema that defines that subject.

By arguing that this account of Frei's work as an opposition to the modern construction of the subject indicates what is most central to narrative theology, I am attempting to position those evaluations of Frei which focus on the issue of correlation. Comstock speaks for many here when he describes Frei as the rejection of correlation and contrasts that with David Tracy's acceptance of correlation (Comstock 1987). Although I do not want to suggest that such a reading of Frei is either wholly without warrant or entirely unhelpful in understanding Frei, I do not find it helpful as an expression of that which is most definitive for Frei. It is the contention of this paper that Frei's opposition to the modern subject is the more determinative and basic aspect of his work and is what drives his opposition to theologies of correlation.

Two Types of Narrative Realism

In order to recognize Frei's rejection of the self-positioning subject as the driving force behind his narrative theology one must understand his use of the phrase "narrative realism." For Frei, narrative realism stands as a means of overcoming the philosophical debate between realism and idealism and the modern subject that is presupposed by both sides of that debate. As a result, Frei's work is more continuous retrospectively with Wittgenstein and prospectively with Milbank, than retrospectively with *Heilsgeschichte* theology and prospectively with Pannenberg.

To say that Frei understands narrative realism as a way of transcending the debate between realists and idealists may seem odd, because the phrase "narrative realism" includes the word "realism." However, by inseparably linking realism to narratives, Frei is defending the church's realistic reading of biblical narratives against those who would allow the church's practice of reading to be constrained by prior realist conceptions of truth. Frei regards the church's realistic reading to be gesturing toward a theological understanding of truth that is capable of overcoming the dichotomy between re-

alism and idealism. Although Frei does not spell out his understanding of narrative realism as clearly as this in any one place, I shall defend it below by examining the way in which he suggests that a realistic reading of the biblical narratives can function to oppose the modern subject and those constructions of knowledge that derive from that subject.

Before examining Frei's discussion of the way in which narrative realism might function, however, I cannot resist the temptation to offer something of the way in which I might construct a typology of narrative theology if I were to contribute to that cottage industry. The only justification that I can provide for this is that the contrast might help to clarify how Frei understands narrative realism. In contrast with Frei, who is a *narrative realist*, and thereby wants to transcend the debate between realists and idealists, there are theologies which are *realist*, because of a commitment to a general philosophical defense of a realist conception of truth. These latter realist theologies might be willing to accept that narratives should be appropriated as the most accurate means of realistically referring to human realities, such as enacted sequences of events or modes-of-being-in-the-world. However, for these realists, narratives remain subordinate to more primary means of depicting that which is real, whether that be some form of historical-critical study or a phenomenological account of humanity's limit possibilities. In contrast with that kind of philosophically realist appropriation of narratives, Frei calls upon the church's practice of reading the Bible in a narrative realist mode as a theoretically underdeveloped means for theology to bypass both philosophical realism and antirealism.

Narrative Realism in Relation to Herder and Historicism

My depiction of Frei's understanding of narrative realism as a means of transcending the realism-idealism dichotomy and the self-positioning subject underlying both sides of that dichotomy is most clearly elucidated in Frei's discussion of Herder and the development of historicism in Germany in the nineteenth century. Because Herder occupies a place so close to the kind of realistic reading of the biblical narratives that Frei wants to defend, Frei's discussion of Herder affords him a rare opportunity in his mostly historical survey to more carefully specify precisely what he objects to in the transformations that took place in biblical hermeneutics during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By examining the way in which Frei describes how Herder and German historicism prevented a narrativist realist understand-

ing of the Bible, one can discern that which narrative theology is to oppose and how it is to function for Frei.

The fascinating place that Herder occupies in Frei's narrative is evidenced by the contrasting assessments that Frei makes of Herder. On the one hand Frei says that Herder "came closer than any other major figure at the end of the eighteenth century to taking realistic narrative seriously as a literary explanatory category, and not merely as a clue to the historical or nonhistorical status of stories" (Frei 1974:186); and that he

was the one major commentator in Germany at the end of the eighteenth century who came close to a realistic interpretation of the explicative meaning of biblical narrative, without reducing that realism either to evidence in favor of historical veracity or to part of an accommodationist theory of the biblical stories. He did not simply identify realistic depiction with ostensive reference or ideal reference (198-9).

Yet, on the other hand, Frei says that Herder's historicism "is finally so utterly inimical to a realistic perspective of historical and history-like narrative" (202). Ultimately it is the centrality of the self-positing subject in the historicism that Frei sees developing with Herder which makes him utterly inimical to the narrative realism that Frei wants to reinstate. Frei's discussion of Herder also indicates that in *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* Frei describes narrative realism in terms of a return to the text itself. After drawing out these points in Frei's account of Herder I shall identify them in Frei's later work in the following section of this paper.

Several of the features of a narrative realist reading of the Bible that Frei regards as definitive of that position can be gleaned from the various affirmations which are included in Frei's evaluation of Herder. Frei commends Herder for insisting that the central fact claims of the gospels and other biblical stories are absolutely indispensable to a Christian reading of the Bible (188). Herder's recourse to analogies and figures as those things which provide a sense of the Bible's unity (194) is also affirmed for its affinity with Frei's own defense of figural and typological reading as the way in which a partial, yet significant, access to providential design is disclosed (28, 77). Frei is also drawn to Herder because "Herder was strongly persuaded that the written expression is perfectly congruent with its subject matter" (189). However, Frei's affirmation of Herder remains qualified by an important difference that Frei perceives between Herder and the kind of narrative

realism that he himself hopes to recover. An examination of that difference is perhaps even more revealing of Frei's own position than the similarities already mentioned.

Although Herder equates the written expression of the Bible with its subject matter, he locates the true meaning of those harmoniously related elements elsewhere, in the spirit of the present interpreter, a spirit which partakes in the one universal human spirit. To Frei's delight, Herder asserts that a text's fact claim, narrative depiction, and spirit are all inseparable from one another. Yet, in complete disagreement with Frei, Herder contends that in order for that unity to be rendered effectively "there has to be a convergence between fact claim, depiction, and ancient spirit, *and also* between this amalgam and the appropriate stance of present spirit or present self-positioning" (189, emphasis added). Similarly, although Herder defends a figural unity of the whole Bible, Frei observes, that for Herder, that unity is only realized in conjunction with the self-positioning of the interpreter. Frei states his objection to Herder most pointedly when he says that

The basic and indispensable condition for understanding this phenomenon (the universal and distinctively human phenomenon of cultural spirit), which rapidly became a technical explanatory category as well, is that the interpreter knows himself to be partaking of a special historical location, that of the present. Once the interpretive perspective has in this fashion become a condition for understanding explicative meaning, the realistic narrative stance has been destroyed, no matter how strongly the realistic quality or spirit of the writing is affirmed (192).

Or again Frei says that with Herder, "Realistic and figural reading... here gives way to an independent spiritual self-positioning which then locates itself as well as specific past epochs by relating itself to earlier spiritual positionings, locating them in turn by their presently accessible, or spiritually present recapitulation" (199) and that the transport of past occurrences into present experience "heightens not only one's awareness of the past but also of the present, and one's awareness of oneself as present and aware of both present and past" (204). It is this central and determining role that Herder grants to the self-present subject to which Frei is utterly opposed, and which Frei understands narrative realism to transcend.

In his account of the German historicism that flourished after and in continuity with Herder, Frei further develops his understanding of narrative re-

alism as a means of opposing a present subject by extending his opposition to the various theoretical frameworks which presuppose that self-present subject. Frei criticizes German historicism for its antirealism³ and for its enthronement of a distinctive mode of consciousness (203–4). Frei also criticizes Kant for defining “The uniqueness and otherness of the self (the subject) from the world (the object) (as) the condition of human freedom” (206). Although Frei does not charge Herder with having fully espoused the subject-object schema as that through which the knowledge of every cultural object must be analyzed in the manner that Kant later presented that schema, Frei, nevertheless, contends that Herder’s “view of history bears all the marks of the preschematic sensibility underlying it” (201). Frei’s criticism of historicism’s complicity with Kant’s subject-object schema also yields a criticism of historicism for its understanding of history as the realization of a kind of human freedom which is the result of a human creation of a world within which humanity can feel at home: “the historical world... became the embodiment of this human freedom, so intimately related to the sense of presence and self-awareness” (206, cf. 214). Historicism created a world that is so intimately related to the human sense of self-awareness, yet, so unrelated to the providence of the God revealed in Jesus Christ. Frei concludes his critique of historicism by saying that in historicism man only encounters himself writ large (213). Frei’s understanding of narrative realism as an opposition to Herder, historicism, and the prioritization of the subject-object schema is summed up by the statement that “the sense of the reality of inwardness and its tension with external reality prevented, on stylistic and substantive grounds, a development of realistic narrative” (207).

A Narrative Realist Conception of the Subject

In addition to criticizing the reading practices of Herder and historicism for their complicity with the self-present subject of modernity, Frei attempts to develop, particularly in *The Identity of Jesus Christ*, an alternative, more ma-

3. In arguing that Frei should be understood as critical of antirealism (though not as an empirical realist, but rather as one who has transcended that polar opposition) I am in agreement with Loughlin’s rejection of Mark Wallace’s reading of Frei as espousing a kind of relativism that is in discontinuity with Barth on this point. With Loughlin, I read Frei as in continuity with Wallace’s description of Barth (Loughlin 156–8).

terially and contingently located understanding of subjectivity that could displace the overwhelmingly inner subject of modernity. Frei defends his reflections on subjectivity in *Eclipse* by noting the contingency of the modern construction of an inward, self-positioning subject who is naturally alienated from objective reality. Frei follows Auerbach in perceiving this separation of an internally developing subject from the external social world in the emergence of the novel (212), and in attributing that separation to a general “lack of ability or desire to cope realistically with contemporary historical forces” (217). Frei then gestures toward an alternative conception of subjectivity by commending Lessing’s identification of money as a “significant social element entering into individual character, molding personal relations in a social context” (210). Frei’s most pertinent comments on human subjectivity in *Eclipse* are found in his concluding reflections on Schleiermacher. In lamenting what Schleiermacher’s prioritization of consciousness prevented Schleiermacher from seeing, Frei says that

[Schleiermacher] could not have made the cognate move of defining character and significant social context by reference to each other, preference once again being given neither to one nor the other. For that move would have meant investing the surface mores and behavior patterns of society with genuine importance in their own right, allowing the individual to define himself (or be defined) sharply by his relation to this particular context (312).

In opposition to all of the conceptual schemes and hermeneutical contexts which developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Frei holds out the possibility of a model of human subjectivity in which “the human situation is characterized by intentional agency ingredient in external, “objective” contingent circumstances and social contexts and is, in turn, shaped by them” (321). This is clearly expressed in *Identity* when he argues against thinking of the self as a ghost in a machine (Frei 1975:41–4). Although Frei concedes that there is a mysterious element implicit in the idea of a person’s identity, he concludes that “self-manifestation in both word and body suggests that the elusive and persistent subject can only be described indirectly, i.e., in and through its manifestation” (Frei 1975:97). Thus, in his direct reflections on subjectivity, Frei seeks out a complex and balanced account that recognizes the importance of both intentional agency and contingent, public manifestation of character, giving preference to neither one nor the other.

Although Frei's reflections on a more complex model of subjectivity remain only partial, his conviction that such a model is possible, that it would fundamentally oppose the mentalist-individualist, self-positioning subject of modernity, and that something like it is presupposed by narrative realism, stands behind the whole of Frei's account of the development of hermeneutics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Frei's implicit contention is that Christian practice, particularly the practice of reading the gospel narratives as realistic narratives, requires an understanding of subjectivity or agency in which character and society are firmly related, and in which the continuity of character is found precisely in the contingency of a narrative. However, Frei's reflections on the subject remain focused on the subject who is depicted within the narrative text which seems to stand on its own; and his reflections on the reading subject never attain the level of complexity developed there. This deficiency in Frei's work is most clearly evident in the influence that New Criticism exercises over Frei's understanding of the reading process.

Appeals to the Text Itself as the Means to Restoring Narrative Realism

The influence of New Criticism upon Frei's early work is most directly evidenced in Frei's description of the reading of realistic narratives as a surrender to *the text in itself*. Again, the driving force behind Frei's narrative realism, and his appropriation of New Criticism's understanding of the reading process, is his opposition to the self-positioning subject of modernity. However, by simply adopting New Criticism's appeal to the text in itself Frei not only displaces the self-positioning subject, but also the more complex, contingent, and narrative subject that he attempts to account for in his reflections on narrative agency. For New Critical theory does not transcend the subject-object schema, but only attempts to eliminate the subject half of that dichotomy. Thus, in Frei's New Critical appeals to the text in itself one can see his negative aim of opposing the self-present subject of modernity taking such precedence that it hinders his ability to positively account for the church's reading of scripture.

Throughout his work Frei refrains from developing a full constructive proposal for comprehending the process of understanding that takes place in the reading of realistic narratives. Frei does not counter modern epistemologies with a theological epistemology, but only appeals to the church's practice of reading the Bible as a realistic narrative. However, description is not theory-neutral; and Frei's theory-laden, normative accounts of the read-

ing of realistic narratives clearly indicates his indebtedness to the theoretical framework of New Criticism.

Frei's continuity with New Criticism is most readily apparent in his references to "the text in itself." Frei contends that narrative realism can be restored by locating the meaning in the text itself. Loughlin indicates this dependence upon New Criticism in Frei's early work when he says, "Hans Frei sought to show how his reading of the scriptural story—as disclosing the identity of Jesus Christ—was what he called a normative or aesthetic reading of the biblical texts: a reading that the texts themselves force upon us" (Loughlin 77). This is confirmed in Frei's own words when he says, in an early essay included in *Theology and Narrative*, that

Normative interpretation is a matter of the structure of the narrative itself and seeing if the text as given has a genuine structure... The formal structure of the narrative itself is the meaning, not the author's intention nor an ontology of language nor yet the text's impact (Frei 1993:33-4).

Additionally, as in Frei's understanding of the function of narrative realism, his understanding on this point is also evidenced in his discussion of Herder. Frei criticizes Herder for failing to locate the meaning of a text in the cumulative narrative itself (Frei 1974:192). Similarly, Frei criticizes Schleiermacher for his inability to allow the text itself to constitute its own meaning: "The text itself, not as self-expressions or 'word-events,' but simply as the formal shape of a story, cannot be the meaning or the subject matter of narrative" (Frei 1974:323). Finally, Frei's New Critical equation of the understanding of a realistic narrative with a perception of the text itself is evidenced in his description of the mythophiles' rejection of narrative realism: "they could obviously find no room for a proposal claiming that the narrative itself is the meaning of the text, that it refers to no other 'subject matter,' and that the meaning, to the extent that one does think of it as at all distinct from the text, emerges cumulatively from the text itself" (Frei 1974:270).

With this allegiance to a New Critical understanding of the reading process Frei strengthens his opposition to the self-positioning subject that rose to a place of prominence in nineteenth century hermeneutics. New Criticism appears to counter that subject by displacing it altogether. However, by defending the adequacy of the New Critic's account of the reading process Frei's work remains distorted by the subject-object schema that derived from the

self-positioning subject. For the very idea of the text in itself presupposes the dichotomy between subject and object. As a result, Frei's understanding of the reading of realistic narratives fails to rise to the level of complexity and adequacy for which his reflections on agency and character are reaching.

NARRATIVE REALISM IN FREI'S LATER WORK

Even if it is granted that in his historical survey of eighteenth and nineteenth century hermeneutics Frei sketched his understanding of narrative realism as an opposition to the self-positioning present subject, one might contend that there is a break between Frei's earlier and later work. One could argue that Frei's later work should be defined by its opposition to Paul Ricoeur and David Tracy. As a result, one could defend Comstock's typology of narrative theology and argue that Frei's later work is most determinatively characterized by its opposition to correlation. Alternatively, one could argue that Frei's later concern for the church's practice of reading scripture for the literal sense marks a break in his work. This appears to be what Loughlin presupposes when he characterizes narrative theology, as a whole, as the rejection of every foundation other than the community that tells the story by which it is told. However, I shall argue for a more determinative continuity between Frei's early and late work.⁴ Therefore, Ricoeur and Tracy should be read as incidental casualties of Frei's rejection of the modern, self-present subject. Further, Frei's appeal to the church's practice of reading for the literal sense should be read in continuity with a New Critical understanding of the reading of narratives. And again, that concern for the literal sense of scripture remains a way of opposing the tendency to allow a certain construction of the subject to constrain the church's practices.

Opposition to Correlation or to the Self-positioning Subject?

While it is true that Frei's attention is often turned toward Ricoeur and Tracy in his later work, his criticism of both remains most determinatively shaped by his opposition to the modern subject. Frei delineates the reasons for his opposition to Ricoeur's phenomenological hermeneutics most thoroughly

4. Although Charles L. Campbell does not focus on Frei's opposition to the self-positioning subject in the manner that I have, he repeatedly argues against readings of Frei which emphasize a discontinuity between his early and late work. See Campbell 1997.

in “The ‘Literal Reading’ of Biblical Narrative in the Christian Tradition: Does It Stretch or Will It Break?” (Frei 1993:117–152) In that essay Frei argues that Ricoeur retains the subject-object schema together with the self-positioning subject under the guise of a dialectic between understanding and discourse. As a result, the meaning of the text is dependent upon the interpreter’s understanding, a determinatively “present” understanding which emerges as “an internal event; it is nothing less than the centered self or transcendental ego in that particular and basic mode” (125). Further, Frei contends that this acceptance of the subject-object schema and the centered subject will inevitably yield “human reality in its wholeness” as the subject matter of the biblical, and all narratives, rather than any particular content that they might otherwise have possessed (128). This criticism echoes Frei’s earlier criticism of historicism as only enabling humanity to encounter itself writ large.

In addition to Ricoeur and Tracy, Frei also engages the work of Derrida in “The ‘Literal Reading.’” But again, this only indicates further Frei’s continued concern to oppose the modern prioritization of a self-present subject. Frei appropriates Derrida for his own purposes by commending the Deconstructionists for recognizing that “‘understanding’ as self-presence is the indispensable and irreducible counterpart to textual ‘meaning’ as linguistic presence, and vice versa” (135), and for arguing for “the instability and emptiness of the entire categorical scheme in which mutually indispensable conceptual devices sustain each other” (136). Thus, Frei again rejects the subject-object scheme that was opened up by Descartes’ separation of a self-contained, self-certain ego of ‘understanding’ from the understood world (132).

Frei’s later work not only continues to develop his opposition to theorizations of the process of understanding which presuppose the self-present, inner subject, but also continues his attempt to develop a more historically, materially, socially, and contingently located understanding of the subject. Frei criticizes Ricoeur’s position for its depiction of Jesus “as ascriptive subject chiefly in the form of consciousness, that is, of his selfhood as ‘understanding’” (126). As a result, even the story’s description of Jesus can only attribute to him a set of abstract and general virtues or characteristics that are present to the understanding prior to their identification with Jesus: “the archetype is identified by the virtues, not they by him through his self-enactment in significant temporal sequence” (128). In opposition to that “nonagential or preagential view of the person as linguistic self-expression

rather than embodied self-enactment,” Frei continues to develop his concern for a more embodied understanding of the subject. Frei argues that “it is narrative specificity through which we describe an intentional-agential world and ourselves in it” (112). With that comment, and a number of other similar statements, Frei insists more carefully than he had in his earlier work, that although one must oppose the internal, self-present subject, that opposition does not entail a complete dismissal of the idea of intentional agency (129). Rather, by placing agency within a more particular and narrative understanding of the subject, Frei is striving after a balanced understanding of the subject. In all of these discussions of Ricoeur, Tracy, Derrida, and a contingent and embodied agency one finds continuity rather than discontinuity between Frei’s early and later work, a continuity that remains decidedly opposed to the inner, self-positioning subject of modernity.

From New Criticism to the *Sensus Literalis*

Finally, it is left to consider Frei’s later reflections on the church’s practice of reading for the literal sense. If an argument for a significant discontinuity between Frei’s early dependence upon New Criticism and his later discussion of *sensus literalis* can be defended then one might be justified in adopting Loughlin’s characterization of narrative theology as the rejection of every foundation other than the community that tells the story by which it is told as a fitting description of not only Milbank’s theology but also Frei’s later work. However, I shall argue instead that even Frei’s later work continues to be influenced by New Criticism in a manner that secures continuity with his earlier work even as it places him in discontinuity with Milbank and Loughlin on the issues of the constitution of the text and the reading practice of the church. Further, it may be Frei’s dogged opposition to the modern subject that leads him to retain a New Critical understanding of the church’s reading of scripture with its total elimination of subjectivity, even as he recognizes that that reading practice can only be justified from within itself. Thus, it is appropriate to speak of the whole of Frei’s work as a project aimed primarily at opposing the encroachment of the modern subject into theology.

The question of the relationship between Frei’s early appeals to the text itself and his later discussions of the *sensus literalis* remains a source of contention among those who read Frei. In George Hunsinger’s *Afterward to Theology and Narrative*, he notes the ambiguity in Frei’s statements on this issue by saying,

What remains perplexing, however, is just how Frei thinks text and tradition, formal narrative structure and communal *sensus literalis*, are finally related in the justification of how the church reads scripture. (In other words, why does Frei suppose that the traditional *sensus literalis*—its ascription of certain predicates to Jesus alone—is still really justified, and to what extent is this justifiability thought to depend on a description of the gospels' formal narrative structure?) (Frei 1993:259)

However, if one examines the way in which Frei discusses New Criticism and describes the church's reading for the literal sense, one finds a New Critical understanding of Reformed reading practices that remains at odds with Milbank and Loughlin's later reflections on the constitution of and reading of the text of scripture.

Frei is unquestionably critical of New Criticism and his own earlier implicit support of it in "The 'Literal Reading' of Biblical Narrative." However, in Frei's rather contorted discussion of New Criticism in that article, he only criticizes New Criticism *as a general theory of reading*, not as an account of the church's reading of scripture. And even in his later work Frei continues to accept New Criticism as an adequate description of the particular reading practice of the church which, by faith, affirms the Christian dogma of Jesus Christ as incarnate Son of God and, as a literary equivalent of that dogma, "endows the text with the stature of complete and authoritative embodiment of 'truth' in 'meaning'" (Frei 1993:141). Therefore, Frei concludes that "the irony of New Criticism is to have taken this specific case and rule and to have turned them instead into a general theory of meaning, literature, and even culture, in their own right" (142). Or similarly, in a much cited phrase, Frei contends that the New Critics put the cart before the horse by placing a New Critical reading of scripture before the doctrine of the incarnation (142). He does not say, however, that New Critics have employed the wrong cart, as perhaps existentialist hermeneutical theory has. He only argues that New Critics are without warrant in their defense of their position as a general theory of understanding which can be developed *a priori* rather than as a Christian understanding of the way in which the church should read the Gospels *a posteriori* to its affirmation by faith that the possibility of the complete unity of the divine and the human natures of Jesus or of the truth and meaning of the Gospels is already an actuality (141–2).

This argument for continuity between Frei's earlier and later positions and for a significant qualification of the suggestion that Frei's later work marks a separation of himself from New Criticism is further supported by a consideration of the way in which Frei describes the church's reading practice. He describes the reading for the literal sense in a manner that is wholly continuous with a New Critical reading of texts. In describing the practices of Calvin and Luther, Frei says, "The text did not refer to, it *was* the linguistic presence of God, the fit embodiment of one who was himself 'Word,' ... for the Christian interpretive tradition truth is what is written, not something separable and translinguistic that is written about" (108).

Thus, even as Frei roots his understanding of narrative realism in the church's practice of reading the Bible for the literal sense rather than in the nature of the text itself, Frei still accepts New Critical theory as an adequate description of that church practice. The transition between Frei's earlier appeals to the text itself and his later appeals to the church's practice of reading for the literal sense is a transition from saying that there is a category of texts that constitute realistic narratives and which, because of their inherent nature, should be read a certain way, to saying that although one cannot speak generally of texts or even of the way in which the Bible inherently requires that it be read, the church, when it is in agreement with its affirmation of the incarnation, has always already read the Bible in the manner that is specified by New Criticism. Already in Frei's early work, under the influence of New Criticism, he believes that he has arrived at an adequate account of the church's proper reading of scripture. And, partly because he is convinced that Christians are more likely to agree on what they believe than on how they believe, he never feels compelled to significantly reformulate his positive understanding of the Church's reading of scripture. Even after rejecting New Criticism as a general theory of reading, Frei regards his previous description of the church's reading practice as adequate.

If this argument for the unity of Frei's early and later work is accepted, and particularly if the continued influence of New Criticism upon Frei's thought can be traced to New Criticism's expulsion of the subject from consideration in the constitution of meaning, then there is good reason for identifying Frei's work negatively as a rejection of the self-positioning subject of modernity. This is not to deny Frei's deep concern for the positive and constructive practices of the church. However, Frei's more theoretical arguments are usually negatively directed; and his theoretical work is most vulnerable to criticism precisely when he assumes a more positive direction and attempts to

describe the church's practice of reading scripture. Finally, it should be noted that in criticizing Frei's description of the church's practice I am decidedly not criticizing his deference to the practices of the church, which is the embodiment of God's presence. Rather, my argument is that Milbank and Loughlin provide a better account of the church's practice of reading scripture than Frei's New Critical understanding of that practice. Although Frei rightly identifies the need for the church to oppose modern constructions of the subject that can constrain the proper functioning of the church's practices, Milbank and Loughlin provide a better positive account of how to understand the church's practices. Their account of the church's reading of scripture not only provides one with a better description of a practice that is already in place, but also redoubles the force of that practice and enables it to flourish in a manner that a less satisfactory description cannot do.

CHURCH AND SCRIPTURE WITHOUT THE MODERNIST SUBJECT

Having argued for a reading of the whole of Frei's work as an opposition to the self-positioning, inner subject of modernity, I shall conclude by returning to the question of the continuity between that project and the work of Milbank and Loughlin. With Loughlin I want to incorporate narrative theology's opposition to the modern subject within an ecclesologically focused refusal of every foundation for theology other than the community that tells the story by which it is told. However, as I understand Frei, one must recognize a discontinuity between Frei, on the one hand, and Milbank and Loughlin, on the other hand, at precisely this point of understanding the constitution of the biblical text and the church's practice of reading that text. Nevertheless, that discontinuity does not subvert the argument for a continuity between Frei and Milbank, because their continuity can be more firmly established by their common opposition to the modern subject and every form of rationality that derives from that subject.

The Subjectivity of Frei's Reading Subject?

Although Frei's reflections on the narrative, embodied subject seek out a balance between intentional agency and external, public embodiment of character, Frei fails to achieve a similar balance with respect to his reflections on the church's practice of reading scripture. Rather than transcending, or even finding a mediating position within, the subject-object schema that modernity has imposed upon one's understanding of the process of reading, Frei's

appeal to the text in itself, as either warranted by New Criticism or by the church's practice of reading the text in a manner analogous to New Critical accounts of reading, merely drops the subjective pole of the modern dichotomy in favor of the objective pole. Yet, to adopt either of those poles is to be implicated in their prior bifurcation. Although Frei believes that narrative realism can reinstate a position prior to the modern bifurcation of subject and object, and prior to the primacy of the self-positioning subject, his appeal to the text itself is predicated upon that very distinction.⁵ As a result, Frei's account of the church's reading practice contradicts his attempts to find a more complex and embodied understanding of subjectivity by eliminating every aspect of the subject from his account of reading.

Frei's own analysis of Derrida indicates how close Frei was to recognizing this danger in his appropriation of New Criticism as a means of opposing the modern subject's distortion of the church's reading of scripture. In considering Derrida, Frei affirms Derrida's recognition that "'understanding' as self-presence is the indispensable and irreducible counterpart to textual 'meaning' as linguistic presence, and vice versa" (Frei 1993:135). Yet, because Frei reads Derrida primarily in opposition to the hermeneutics that he finds represented by Ricoeur, and because Frei rejects Ricoeur's discussion of a meaning in front of the text with the idea of a meaning that is inherent in the contingent narrative of the text itself, Frei believes that he has escaped both sides of the dichotomy between self-presence and linguistic presence. However, New Criticism is not wholly separate from that dichotomy; Frei himself recognizes it as only a transmogrification of the older tradition of hermeneutics (Frei 1993:124). That assessment of New Criticism provides support for claiming that Frei's attempt to move from a self-present subject to a materially embodied subject must remain in tension with an account of the reading process that is too closely aligned with New Criticism. Because Frei rejects a meaning in front of the text he may not be thrown back on Ricoeur's

5. This way of phrasing my criticism of Frei is largely dependent upon Catherine Pickstock's critique of asyndeton in *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 96. It would be interesting to examine Pickstock's liturgical negotiation of time and space which "proposes the possibility of a redemptive restoration of genuine subjectivity" (220) as a further extension of Milbank's constructive theological position in order to determine whether it simultaneously furthers Frei's opposition to the self-positioning subject of modernity. Although I believe that it does, I read her work too late to incorporate it into this paper.

self-present subject; yet by locating a meaning in the text itself, Frei remains captured by a schema that denies, or perhaps better, occludes, the agency of the reading subject. Further, although Frei recognizes the church's corporate agency in continuing the tradition of reading the text for its literal sense, when he actually describes what it is to read the text thusly, he demands that that corporate agency cease. But the corporate agency of the church and of the individuals formed by the church does not stop at the moment that reading begins. Thus, despite his best intentions, Frei's reflections on the constitution of the text and the process of understanding that text remain as a denial of the subjective pole of the subject-object dichotomy rather than as the transcendence of that dichotomy. An understanding of the reading subject that would be more continuous with Frei's reflections on the contingent, material and narrative embodiment of human agency requires Milbank and Loughlin's recognition of the mutual constitution of the text and reader. That position can not only oppose the modern subject, but can also give voice to a positive account of the church's practices that is not implicated in theoretical frameworks which presuppose the bifurcation of reality that enables that construction of subjectivity.

Mutual Constitution without the Modern Subject

As Milbank and Loughlin speak of the mutual constitution of the church and scripture, they clearly presuppose that one must acknowledge a place for the subject, at least the corporate subjectivity of the church, within the process of reading. With specific reference to the reading subject, Milbank speaks of the subject's creative and imaginative supplementation of the text (Milbank 1990:383-4). However, the most fully developed account of the reading subject that is being introduced by Milbank and Loughlin can be found in Surin's *The Turnings of Darkness and Light*.

Surin argues that if one simply eliminates the subject in reading, as I have argued that Frei's allegiance to New Criticism leads him to do, then one cannot avoid losing the object as well. Therefore, rather than seek to eliminate the subject, one must understand signification in terms of a dialectical relation between subject and text: "The loss of the subject, however, necessarily presages the loss of the object, and thus subverts the whole dynamic of signification. Signification requires the dialectical tension between subject and object to be maintained" (Surin 50). Despite the fact that Surin speaks in terms of subjects *and* objects, this need not be regarded as a resignation to the modernity's subject-object schema which only counters modernity by

insisting that one never give precedence to either side of that dichotomy. In opposition to modernity's immanentism, Surin also argues that this subject is a "subject-in-process" (Surin 217) and that the very condition of possibility for the whole process of signification is God:

what makes 'referentiality' possible in 'religious' or specifically Christian discourse is precisely the imaginary signification God. So for the Christian faith the central signification God—which is 'meta-referential'—defines, and indeed constitutes, what is 'real'. 'God' belongs to an indeterminate, unformed and unlimited linguistic totality, a reservoir of 'tropic' potential, out of whose moments the 'real' emerges (Surin 53).

Thus, Milbank, Loughlin, and Surin move beyond Frei by speaking of a subject, not only as the embodiment of intentional agency, but also as partly constitutive of both the church and scripture, which emerge from the totality of God as mutually constitutive of one another.

For a more complete understanding of postmodern theological subjectivity in general, a lengthy examination of Milbank's understanding of the relation between his "Postmodern Critical Augustinianism" and modernity would be required. Despite the overwhelming nature of Milbank's criticism of modernity's violent construction of reality and the autonomous, creative subject which stands in the middle of that construction of reality, Milbank does not oppose all "subjective" creativity. However, he wants to defend that creativity theologically rather than on the basis of an isolated subject which is free to create because of its alienation from objectivity. Therefore, Milbank argues that humanity is called to participate in constantly new temporal unravelings of creation *ex nihilo*, because "God himself... is differentiation" (Milbank 1991:236–7). Thus, even as Milbank is highly critical of modernity, he retains for a postmodern theology several central aspects of modernity's recognition of creativity as profound contributions to the development of orthodox Christian theology. He does not criticize modernity for furthering human creativity and differentiation, but only for incorporating those within an agonistic myth and its corresponding violent and conflictual organization of the objective world. Milbank seeks to achieve these aims by renarrating a focus on human creativity and differentiation as aspects of the church's participation in a peaceful proliferation of difference. It is always within the larger frame of creation's participation in the peaceful prolifera-

tion of difference that is the Trinity that Milbank's discussions of human subjectivity must be located.

Within the context of that postmodern Trinitarian theology, Milbank argues for an understanding of textual subjects that are positioned by their inclusion within Christianity's uniquely non-substantive metaphysics. Milbank's opposition to substantialist thinking is clearly in continuity with significant portions of neo-Nietzschean theory; yet, he contends that only Christian theology is capable of positively giving voice to a non-substantive metaphysic. Within that Christian non-substantive metaphysic, the real is defined as "a world of temporary relational networks, always being re-distributed, with greater and greater 'freedom,' as one passes from mineral to vegetable to animal to cultural animal" (Milbank 1991:226). The resulting textual human subject is to be understood in terms of a human mind which only "arises within a process which gives rise to 'effects of meaning'" (Milbank 1991:234) and an inwardness which is best understood as "merely a 'fold' in an unraveling text" (Milbank 1997:95). With this account of subjectivity Milbank does not reject inwardness, but he speaks of subjective experience as follows:

the inviolability and subjectivity of such an experience belongs not in interior ineffability, but rather on the surface, as a visible or audible modification to the public stock of sounds, words and images. The subjective, therefore, is conserved not in Cartesian or Kantian interiority, but rather in a Spinozan or Leibnizian structural positionality (Milbank 1990:382).

And for Milbank, as for Surin, this subjectivity is to be understood in a fully theological manner as a real participation in the ongoing peaceful proliferation of difference that is the Trinity: "Yet even this movement, the vehicle of human autonomy, is fully from God, is nothing *in addition* to the divine act-potential, and not equivocally different in relation to him" (Milbank 1991:236). Thus, unlike the modern subject, Milbank's human subject is never sovereign. All sovereignty belongs to God, the provident source of history. In order to read scripture in a manner that corresponds with that sovereignty, the church's corporate subject will not force every reading to answer to its self-present, self-positioning understanding of itself; but rather, will seek to allow its desire to be conformed to the image of God.

With Milbank's theological account of a postmodern subject who participates in the mutual constitution of scripture and the church, both of which in turn participate in and are effects of the infinite series of differences which is the God who differentiates (Milbank 1990:423), one has clearly moved a long way from Frei's call for a return to narrative realism. Even in Frei's later work, Frei never traversed that distance. As my reading of Frei indicates, there remains a significant discontinuity between himself and Milbank at precisely this point. Nevertheless, Milbank and Loughlin's account of the mutual constitution of scripture and the church extends the more determinative aspect of Frei's theology, his opposition to the modern subject. Further, their work supplements Frei's by providing a positive account of the church's reading of scripture that is not implicated in the modern construction of the subject.

Thus, one can read Frei's more negative project as a way of clearing the ground for Milbank's more constructive theology. Frei's rejection of the modern construction of the self-present subject creates a space for Milbank's non-substantialist theological poetics. Frei's own reflections on the church's practice of reading scripture never yielded a position adequate to the task set before the contemporary church. Yet, the persistent suggestion, found throughout his narrative theology, that the church must simply stop at the practice of reading narratives can be regarded as a timely placeholder which was helpful in countering the negative effects of a substantive metaphysics, but which now can be replaced by Milbank's Trinitarian poetics. Therefore, in one's quest to locate narrative theology today, one should go to Cambridge, England where it is involved not only in the negative task of removing inappropriate philosophical presuppositions, but also in the positive task of imaginatively reconfiguring the church's understanding of its practice of reading scripture.

REFERENCES

- Abraham, William J.
 1990 "Still Stuck at Yale." Review of *Unapologetic Theology: A Christian Voice in a Pluralistic Conversation*, by William C. Placher. *The Reformed Journal*, 40/8:19.

Campbell, Charles L.

- 1997 *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Comstock, Gary

- 1987 "Two Types of Narrative Theology." *Journal of the Americal Academy of Religion* LV/4:687-717.

Frei, Hans

- 1974 *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics*. New Haven: Yale University.
- 1975 *The Identity of Jesus Christ: The Hermeneutical Bases of Dogmatic Theology*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- 1992 *Types of Christian Theology*. Ed. G. Hunsinger and W. Placher. New Haven: Yale University.
- 1993 *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays*. Ed. G. Hunsinger and W. Placher. Oxford: Oxford University.

Loughlin, Gerhard

- 1996 *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Milbank, John

- 1990 *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1991 "'Postmodern Critical Augustinianism': A Short Summa in Forty Two Responses to Unasked Questions." *Modern Theology* 7/3:225-37.
- 1997 *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Surin, Kenneth

- 1989 *The Turnings of Darkness and Light: Essays in Philosophical and Systematic Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Through a Mirror Dimly Culture and Theology According to Osadolor Imasogie

J. M. GIVENS, JR.

“AS FOR NOW WE SEE THROUGH A MIRROR DIMLY [αἰνίγματι], THEN face to face. Currently I know by means of a part, then I will know fully even as I am fully known.” With these words (1 Cor 13:12), Paul noted the enigmatic nature of one’s conditioned experience of reality, God, and the gospel. Perhaps nothing colors one’s interpretation more than the culture into which one is immersed from birth. Christians often have lost touch with this truth, misidentifying their perception of the “gospel” with the gospel itself. Osadolor Imasogie, Baptist theologian from Nigeria, grew up witnessing the impact of a Western gospel upon an African people. He has experienced cultural differences through his years of education in the United States and ministry to various people groups in Nigeria. Throughout his career he has sought to educate Christians, African and non-African, about their own culturally conditioned experience of reality and their need for a contextualized theology which addresses the total human within a given culture. This paper explores Imasogie’s theology of culture, particularly as it addresses general revelation, theological development, and the apologetic task of witnessing to Christ in Africa today.

THE MAN AND THE MIRROR: OSADOLOR IMASOGIE AND HIS DEFINITION OF CULTURE

The Man¹

Osadolor was born in Benin City, Nigeria, on 28 June 1928 to Chief Ogbeide and Enehiweze Imasogie. Although both parents were non-Christians, his

1. Sources for biographical data: (Imasogie 1972:iv-vi, xiii; Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary 1979:5; Uwagboe 1995; Imasogie 1997b).

mother had recently turned to the “Almighty God” proclaimed by a monotheistic cult² and she later became a Christian.

After he attended a Baptist primary school and then the Baptist College in Iwo, Imasogie received his Bachelor of Theology from the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, in 1955. Between 1961 and 1964, he studied sociology at Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, and theology at Golden Gate Theological Seminary, San Francisco. While at Golden Gate, Imasogie attended lectures by Eric Rust, visiting professor of apologetics, Old Testament theology, and philosophy of religion from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Later Imasogie would single out Rust as the major figure who significantly influenced his own theology.

In 1966, Imasogie was appointed to the faculty of the Nigerian seminary. Two years later, he returned to the United States to pursue a doctorate under Rust. Upon his return to Nigeria in 1973, Imasogie assumed various administrative posts in the seminary in addition to his teaching responsibilities. In 1979 he became the first Nigerian president of the seminary, a position he would retain until his retirement in 1993. Imasogie has served as president of the Nigerian Baptist Convention (1979–1985), moderator of the World Council of Churches’ Committee on the Programme for Theological Education (1983–1990), and a vice-president of the Baptist World Alliance (1995–2000).

As mentioned above, Imasogie considers Eric Rust to have been the single most important influence upon his theology. This fact is interesting, given the sparse number of direct references to Rust’s works in the writings of Imasogie. In formulating his theology of culture, however, Imasogie does follow Rust’s emphases upon the sacramental nature of the universe and the cosmic Christ (Rust 1953:203–23; Rust 1967:307–16), the faint voice of grace amidst the clear voice of wrath in general revelation (1962:33), myth as an attempt to historicize general revelation (1962:33–8), and the concept of salvation history (1962).

A second influence was the Christian philosophy of Langmead Casserley,³ particularly as it related to apologetics. Indeed, Casserley’s apolo-

2. Childlessness led Enehiweze to forsake her powerless divinity, Olokun, for the “Almighty God,” who soon demonstrated his power through Imasogie’s birth.

3. Julian Victor Langmead Casserley (1909–1978) was a British Christian sociologist who moved into the field of philosophy. Considered a leading voice in Anglican theology, he came to the United States in 1952 and subsequently held a chair in philosophical theology at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Chicago for fifteen years (Harris 1979:160–1).

getic approach was the subject of Imasogie's dissertation.⁴ Emphases of Casserley continued by Imasogie include his views that knowledge is the product of the interaction between the knower and the known (1962:39), that propositional revelation is not itself revelation but is rather the preparatory activity of God to allow for revelation which is "the Unique disclosing of Himself uniquely in unique events" (1951:190-1), that the human has the ability to transcend her/his history/society/culture in a self-critical way (1962:174-5), that theology must be formulated prior to apologetics (1957:226), and that the goal of apologetics is to remove cultural barriers so that the Holy Spirit can have maximum freedom to work upon the individual (1962:140).

Finally, Bolaji Idowu, longtime head of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Ibadan, has been formative for Imasogie, not theologically but methodologically, in that he was one of the first African theologians to attempt any type of an African theology. Also, Idowu has provided Imasogie with valuable insight into African Traditional Religion (Imasogie 1992a:391; 1997b).⁵ These three influences have shaped to varying degrees the theology of Osadolor Imasogie.

The Mirror and Its Dimness

Imasogie utilizes H. Richard Niebuhr's definition of culture in his own attempt to provide "A Christian Attitude to Cultural Revival" (1992b).

Culture is the "artificial secondary environment" which man superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical processes and value (Niebuhr 1951:32).

While this artificial environment brings stability to life, it is by no means static. "Like a living organism, culture does not only increase in complexity but it also modifies and eliminates such elements which in the course of time have become incongruent with the self-conception of the community" (Imasogie 1992b:2).

4. Imasogie chose to major in philosophy of religion so as to discover a means by which to equip Nigerian ministers for the apologetic challenge of "today" (1972:xiii).

5. For an example of Idowu's African theology, see Idowu 1965. For his discussion of African Traditional Religion, see Idowu 1962 and 1973.

Although truth or reality is the same in the absolute sense, “it is not possible for man to attend to every impingement of reality claiming attention on his consciousness, [therefore] he is naturally selective in his response” (Imasogie 1982:104). Culture, along with personal experiences, establish this selective filter (1992a:395).⁶

Thus, there are three separate entities—culture, the human, and reality—each of which can act upon the others and be acted upon by the others. Although the human is pervasively surrounded and enmeshed within her/his cultural surroundings, s/he is at the same time able to transcend her/his culture and to examine critically her/his cultural presuppositions (Imasogie 1972:46; 1992b:2; cf. Casserley 1962:174–5).⁷

Despite glib claims to abstract objectivity, no view is expressed in a vacuum... [T]he view of this author... is already coloured by three factors, viz., African culture, Christian faith, and Baptist perspective... [W]hat has been said does not in any way detract from approximate objectivity. On the contrary, it enhances the possibility... The most biased and unobjective people in the world are those who are either unaware of their presuppositions or, when aware, refuse to acknowledge them (Imasogie 1987:11), [italics mine].

Response to the Mirror's Imperfection

The Christian is thus faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, s/he is confronted with the realization that her/his culture totally permeates her/his being. On the other hand, s/he is faced with the call of Christ to follow him, becoming conformed in every aspect to his person. How then does the Christian respond to this dilemma, given the fact that s/he comes to Christ only from within her/his culture? Imasogie follows Niebuhr's approach by arguing against two alternative responses, “Christ against culture” and the “Christ of culture,” and for the model of “Christ as the transformer of culture” (Imasogie 1992b:5).

6. The Indian parable of the blind men and the elephant, Imasogie states, demonstrates this filtering. Each blind man's interpretation is shaped by his past experiences (culture) and his current experience of the real.

7. This transcendence of the artificial environment (culture) is equivalent to the human's transcendence of the natural environment (nature) while yet remaining a part of it. For a discussion of the human's relation to nature, see Rust 1953:116–21 and Rust 1967:3–4.

Christ against culture is problematic for God's interaction with God's creation in its assertion that culture is *completely* evil. It is also naive in its assertion that one can somehow get outside of one's culture. "Culture, like an atmosphere, is something we can run away from only at the cost of suffocation, in which case, we will not be alive to assess how successful our attempt may have been!" (Imasogie 1992b:9)

Christ of culture subsumes Christianity within the culture and thus it loses its capacity for prophetic critique. This is demonstrated in the Nigerian cultural revival by a reemphasis upon polygamy as the Nigerian Christian ideal for marriage.⁸ This same model resulted in the implantation of a Western Christianity in Nigeria by missionaries who misidentified Christianity with Western civilization (Imasogie 1992b:7–8).

Therefore, Imasogie argues, Christ as the transformer of culture is the most biblical model. It emphasizes God as still active in God's creation. It accepts the fallen condition of human nature, including culture. It affirms the historicity of the Christ-event as God's divine plan to redeem God's creation with Christians serving as God's agents to bring culture into accordance with the purposes of God as revealed in Christ (1992b:8–9).

Thus, Christians should participate in the current cultural revival in Nigeria in order to influence the reappropriation of symbols and customs considered redeemable and the rejection of those elements which are irreconcilable to the Christian life. In this way "[t]he current [redeemable] religious aspects of the revival of culture will eventually become nothing more than a form of entertainment reflecting our past but completely devoid of their religious significance" (1992b:10).⁹

Imasogie's love for his own cultural tradition is demonstrated in his works dedicated to recording the practices of Nigerian Traditional Religion (NTR). Although part of his aim in these works is to provide an understanding of culture upon which Christians can build an effective apologetic, he is also interested in saving a record of this fading portion of his own cultural heritage (Imasogie 1997b). This culture, of which Imasogie is proud, demonstrates both the continuing activity of God's revelation to humans through nature

8. Imasogie asks why not also reinstate the slave trade, human sacrifices, and the divination system (Imasogie 1992b:7–8)?

9. Imasogie notes that already the participants in the Egungun festival are more concerned about winning first prize for their costumes than on maintaining their secret identity, as cultic rules traditionally required. On the Egungun cult see Imasogie 1985:36–7.

and conscience and the continuous distortion of that revelation due to the sinfulness of humans.

THE ENIGMA OF THE LOGOS: CULTURE AND REVELATION

“Behind every religious expression of any people lies the Supreme Reality, for religion is a response-behaviour, no matter how distorted and consequently invalid that response has become” (Imasogie 1973:290). The same may be said of secular ideologies.¹⁰ Religion/ideology is that part of culture which demonstrates the continuous reality of God’s revelation to humanity and humanity’s capacity to respond to that revelation.

The Logos and the Image of God

God has not left Godself without a witness among the nations (Acts 17:30–31). This witness, Imasogie asserts, is the work of the cosmic Christ, or the Logos, who is “the light that lightens every man that comes into the world” (Jn 1:4). Since God is the “Creator of the ends of the earth” (Isa 40:28), it is inconceivable that God would leave some portion of creation without God’s revealing presence. Thus, through the work of the cosmic Christ, God has been preparing God’s creatures for the historical revelation of Jesus Christ, to come in the “fullness of time” (Gal 4:4) (Imasogie 1973:291; cf. Rust 1953:203–23; 1967:307–16).

Apprehension of this revelation would not be possible were it not for the human’s implanted cosmic God-consciousness or image of God. This cosmic God-consciousness is expressed by humans as religion, philosophy, or ideology through the context of their culture and world view. Therefore, if sin has affected the culture within which the human exists and through which the human experiences the revelation of God, then this revelation can be and has become distorted and at times even disguised by the culture (Imasogie 1980a:138; 1982:108).

This sinful distortion leads the human to a recognition of her/his estrangement from God and God’s revelation. “In his sober moment every man is aware of this state of estrangement from God. This invariably creates a state of anxiety for him” (Imasogie 1988:2). At times, this awareness leads to a desire for reconciliation with God as evidenced through a consciousness

10. On secular world views, see Imasogie 1979; 1982; and 1972, chapters three and four.

of guilt. More often, either through rebellion against the testimony of her/his conscience or through indulgence in sin as an attempt to fill the inner void, the human can become desensitized to the revelation of God. "What is plain from the Scripture is that, while God never gives up the desire to reconcile the sinner to himself, the sinner may have become so enmeshed in his way that he renders himself incapable of response to the divine love" (Imasogie 1988:4).

The Enigma of Religion

There is "overwhelming historical evidence of man's ability to respond to the divine" (Imasogie 1982:113). The religions of the world demonstrate a "groping response" to God's self-disclosure mediated to humans through creation (Imasogie 1972:251-2). Therefore, religion is not completely a human invention but it is also a response, however distorted by sin and the filter of one's culture, to the cosmic Christ apprehended by the cosmic God-consciousness (Imasogie 1972:111, 256; 1973:290; 1980a:142).

Religions have attempted to communicate their experience of this revelation through the language of myth.

Mythology... should... be seen... as man's attempt to bridge the gap between the metaphysical and the historical.... [Myths] are more authentic than systematic theology by virtue of their being spontaneous expression of the existential encounter with the spiritual (Imasogie 1980b:2; cf. Rust 1962:33-8).

This mythic language is inevitable for any attempt to communicate one's experience of divine revelation because all apprehension and language are conditioned by the culture and the media of the given society (Imasogie 1972:250, 254).

In the case of NTR, the revelation of God has been interpreted as "bureaucratic monotheism."¹¹ Imasogie invented this term to emphasize the similarities between the Nigerian conception of the Supreme Being, Olodumare, and the traditional Nigerian monarch. The commoner rarely saw or spoke

11. If the African view of deity is fetishism, Imasogie argues, then so too are the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox views of the sacraments. Moreover, belief in divinities with one supreme God is no more polytheistic than the Jewish understanding of the court of Yahweh (Imasogie 1972:205-24; 1985:12-28).

to her/his king but instead interacted with the local chief, or one of the king's administrators, in whom the king had invested authority. Similarly, Olodumare is considered to be withdrawn from the earth, ruling through intermediaries—the divinities—who are personifications of various aspects of nature. Most worship is therefore directed toward the divinities, not because there is no belief in Olodumare, but rather because one goes to the authority in charge to request one's needs (Imasogie 1973:290; 1985:25–6, 30–5). Thus,

[t]he effect of culture and social-political patterns of a people upon the way they express their religious experience cannot be over-emphasized. It must, however, be stressed that these do not create the experience... [but] only condition... it (Imasogie 1973:289).

The spiritual realm consists not only of Olodumare and the divinities but also evil spirits and ancestral spirits. Thus, the physical world is only the visible layer of a multi-dimensional reality in which every physical event has a spiritual cause, either from the assistance of an ancestor or the attack of an evil spirit. Therefore the human must be on her/his guard at all times, making sure that the ancestors are kept happy and that no divinity's taboo is broken (Imasogie 1985:39–41).¹² In such a world view, these spirits and divinities have been emphasized at the expense of Olodumare. This is the perennial problem of the substitution of means for end. Judaism itself was also guilty of this substitution, placing the Law and the Temple over relationship with God.¹³

It is significant that, unlike Judaism, the Nigerian Religion has no prophetic tradition to keep the people from drifting away. This accounts for the degree of distortion of the religious response to the original inner divine self-disclosure to humanity (Imasogie 1972:257).

Distorted Image(s) and the Image of God

How then should the Christian respond to the religions of the world? Since they are genuine attempts to respond to God's revelation through the filter

12. For a fuller discussion of the multi-dimensionality of the world and the conflict this entails, see Imasogie 1972:229–37, 241–6; Imasogie 1985a:33–8, 41–5, 48–50; and Imasogie 1986: 54–6, 59–65.

13. Christianity is also guilty of this substitution at times.

of culture, “[t]he distortion... may be minimized through a superior and more sensitive medium of revelation” (1972:249).

The incarnation of the Son of God in Jesus Christ, the true image of God, has provided this fulness of revelation. Before the advent of Jesus, God could “wink” at the ignorance of humanity (Imasogie 1972:255; 1997b). “Following that Christ-event,” however, “the testimony of the Bible [Acts 17:30–31] is that no nation has any genuine reason to cling to a distorted interpretation of the reality of God which man in his sin cannot escape” (Imasogie 1973:291).

All activities of the cosmic Christ prior to Jesus were not revelation *per se* but were part of the preparatory process leading up to this revelational act. Therefore, all religions, including Judaism, are responses to this foundational activity and vary only in the degree of clarity with which it was apprehended and retained. “This... preparatory process... may be faint and distorted; yet it serves as the *earnest* of the final revelation” (Imasogie 1972:259; cf. Casserley 1951:190–1) [*italics mine*].

As to the eternal destiny of those who have lived prior to the coming of the Christ-event, either before the life of Jesus or prior to the proclamation of the Word in their life, Imasogie states that this must be left up to divine wisdom. The church’s responsibility is to share the gospel message of God’s redemption through Christ with the world. Although this revelation in Christ is so radically unique that it is discontinuous with the other religions, Christian witness should build upon those aspects which are compatible with the Christian faith in its effort to present an incarnational witness to the culture (Imasogie 1972:253; 1973:291–2; 1980a:140–3).

REFLECTING (ON) THE IMAGE: INCARNATING THE GOSPEL WITHIN CULTURE

Within each culture the Christian faith must be born anew, as new wineskins for new wine (Mk 2:22). “For the permanence and depth of Christian conviction on any missionary field must stand or fall on whether or not Christianity is understood as a foreign religion transplanted to a foreign soil or a vital encounter with the Eternal Living God made manifest historically in Jesus Christ” (Imasogie 1973:283).

Foreign Objects Obscuring the Image

Christianity came to Nigeria as a foreign faith. The early church struggled with the movement of the gospel from a primarily Hebraic culture to that of the Graeco-Roman world during the first several centuries of the church. This struggle, seen in the early church councils, however, was masked in many respects because the church was also in the midst of coming to grips with the meaning of the Christ-event and its implications for Christology and monotheism. Although the gospel spread to different cultures as it moved throughout Europe, Imasogie asserts that these cultures were so similar that the theological distinctives which arose from these differences were not evident to the majority of believers.

When the gospel came to sub-Saharan Africa more than one thousand years later, however, "the set formulations of Western Christianity were by then taken for granted without conscious awareness of the historical... and the cultural influences that had shaped them, [and therefore] the Western heralds felt no need to take the African context into consideration in their presentations" (1986:23).

This Westernized Christianity was based on a "quasi-scientific" world view. By "scientific," Imasogie means that missionaries had been influenced by the deistic world view. The modifier "quasi" indicates that these evangelicals had not fully been subsumed within this closed view of the cosmos. They could still speak of Satan, spirits, and angels, since these were biblical concepts, but such words were more cultic language than active spiritual realities. In this kind of world view, the Christian faith had largely devolved into five facts: 1) creation, 2) God as creator, 3) freedom, 4) immortality of the soul, and 5) reward or punishment after death (1986:48-53).¹⁴

The missionaries dismissed the Nigerian belief in spirits as the cause of physical events as mere superstition even though this was more in line with the biblical witness. Many Nigerians, on the other hand, seeing the superior European technology, assumed the missionaries were correct and attempted to discard their world view. Yet the cultural conditioning remains and still surfaces during times of trial (Imasogie 1986:65, 68-70). Imasogie agrees

14. These Christian missionaries "were conservative only in relation to the deists. They would be ultra-liberals compared to medieval Christians" (Imasogie 1986:51).

with Idowu's assertion (1969:13) that the average Nigerian Christian has been left with two Gods: the "stranger God" of the white man and the God who is the foundation of her/his world view. This "stranger God" is only interested in the Nigerian's final destiny and not with redeeming the problems and concerns of everyday life.

Christianity was... embraced intellectually without existential involvement. In other words, the *Word* did not become *flesh* in the African environment and consequently the Eternal Christ could not be existentially apprehended (Imasogie 1986:69).

Minimizing Distortion through Incarnational Theology

The Word must become flesh in the culture, its symbols, and its thought forms, so that the gospel can address the total human in her/his given situation. Failure to incarnate the gospel results in the utilization of a theology from a different culture which addresses issues not raised by the receiving culture and does not meet the questions which *are* being asked. This leads to a shallow Christian commitment and a return to the old answers of the non-Christian culture for the problems not addressed by the imported gospel (Imasogie 1980a:143; 1992a:391).

Imasogie rejects several models for developing a culturally relevant theology before presenting his arguments for a contextual model. First, he notes the problems with the indigenous model. This model, advanced by Idowu, asserts that there is a core gospel to which Western elements have been attached. The goal of indigenization is to remove these Western elements and replace them with African ones. This view is too simplistic in Imasogie's assessment.

[I]f care is not taken, indigenisation can make theologizing a mechanical exercise where one substitutes one cultural element for another. To do so is to miss the whole point of theologizing as a dynamic discipleship process of spirit-led [*sic*] human interaction with God as revealed in Christ in existential encounter within any given life situation (1992a:392).

A second model which is inadequate is that of adaptation. This view presupposes that all theology has a philosophical basis upon which it is predicated. All the missionary needs to do is to choose a new philosophy or reference

framework for the basis and proceed with the process of constructing a new theology. This position can become reductionistic by ignoring those aspects of human nature revealed in divine revelation which do not fit within the chosen framework.¹⁵ The third model rejected is that of ethnotheology. Imasogie's concern with this approach is the negative connotations the term carries within the social sciences for Africans (1992a:392).¹⁶

By contrast, the contextualization model is dynamic, not static. It identifies with a culture, not a particular philosophy. This process allows for the influence of the divine.

It is open to the influence of culture both in perception of reality and in apprehension and appropriation of divine revelation to meet the perceived existential needs of the individual in his cultural milieu. This is to be realized without the imposition of any philosophical filter (Imasogie 1992a:392).

The difference between this model and the indigenous model is that the latter passes the same theology from one culture to another while the former allows the new theology to develop within the framework of the new culture. Thus the latter will always be irrelevant (Imasogie 1992a:393).

Contextualization of one's faith in Christ is an inevitable phenomenon without which one's faith will be rootless in one's existential cultural soil. This phenomenon... is a universal occurrence [*sic*] in the expression of one's religious experience. There is a very fine line between contextualization and syncretism. The process that leads to either of these is often carried out unconsciously.... [Conscious reflection] helps

15. Imasogie gives Latin American liberation theology as an example, as it is built upon Marxist dialectic-materialism (1992a:392). He warns that such an approach, since it is founded in a philosophy rather than the biblical witness, risks fusing the Christian faith with a particular ideology. This becomes a problem for which Christianity must justify its continued relevance after the ideology to which it has identified itself falls from public favor (1980a:131).

16. The problem stems from the existence of two different fields for one phenomenon, culture within societies. Sociology is the field which studies this phenomenon among the "modern" Western societies, and cultural anthropology is the field for the "backward" non-Western societies.

one to guard against unwholesome syncretism which in the end turns out to be “an ill wind that blows no one any good” (Imasogie 1991:23).

Therefore, the Western theologian “must make room for a novel perception of God and spiritual reality in a context different from his own” (Imasogie 1986:84). In developing a contextual theology, three factors must be considered. First, all theologies are culturally conditioned. Second, none of these theologies exhausts the meaning of the Christian message. Finally, each theology must take advantage of all the tools available to it in order to take the context of its audience seriously (Imasogie 1986:43).¹⁷

Imasogie identifies the following sources for developing a contextual theology. The subjective source of the Word of God mediated by the Holy Spirit is the first source for the Christian. The primary objective source is the Scripture, “being the inspired book or the primary record of human witness to the divine self-disclosure in history.” Secondary objective sources include church tradition, culture and world view, and historical situations. “Any failure to recognize the crucial role of these ‘givens’ in Christian theologizing in Africa will only result in the production of African anthropology rather than African Christian theology” (Imasogie 1986:72–4).

As the theology develops, certain emphases will evolve on the basis of the African world view. First, Christ’s present power over evil spiritual forces will be re-emphasized. In this way, it will be demonstrated to the African that Christ’s salvation is for this world as well as the next. Second, the Holy Spirit’s role as the mediator of the Living Christ to the church will be expounded. While the Spirit is the one who creates the bond within the earthly church, the Spirit is also the mediator of the risen Christ who replaces the ancestral spirits as the connection for the human to her/his spiritual communities. Third, emphasis must be given to the omnipresent immanence of God and the sacramental nature of the universe in order to remove the need for the divinities in the world view (Imasogie 1986:76–86; 1992a:395).

With this Trinitarian emphasis, “the African will have no urge to look elsewhere for security when faced with what he interprets as a metaphysical problem inasmuch as Christ is seen to be all-sufficient for every need” (Imasogie 1986:86). These African insights into the gospel will ultimately

17. Imasogie notes that current African theologians, trained in the West, must work within three cultures to accomplish their goal: the cultures of the biblical message, their theological training, and their audience (1992a:394).

enrich “the whole corpus of Christian theology, since it will add freshness and new insights that have been ignored in other cultures because of the difference between such cultures and world views on the one hand and those of the Africans on the other” (Imasogie 1992a:396).

Enfleshing the Logos by Reflecting the Image

Imasogie predicates a viable apologetic on the prior development of such a contextualized theology for the receiving culture (Imasogie 1980a:134; cf. Casserley 1957:226).¹⁸ The Christian apologist must understand the religion/culture of the people on the phenomenological level. Such a sincere desire to know the other’s viewpoint will result in true apologetic dialogue. This genuine interest in the other’s religion/culture will engender reciprocal interest in the apologist’s message. It will also enable the apologist to identify all of the implications which the gospel has for humans in a particular culture to which the gospel is to be applied (Imasogie 1980a:144; 1980b:4).

In order to demonstrate to the non-Christian her/his need for the gospel, the apologist must present the gospel in a relevant way so as to address the total needs of the human being *within* the thought patterns of the individual’s culture. Then, *against* the background of this cultural world view, the apologist will demand an existential response of the individual for Christ. In this way, Imasogie argues, the gospel witness will be neither alien to the culture nor subordinated to it (Imasogie 1980a:143–4; 1992b:10–1).

Apologetics is a necessary part of the task of theology because of the practice of non-Christians to see their religion/ideology as a viable alternative response to the revelation of God. The goal of the apologist, then, is to demonstrate the untenability of the current religion/ideology by attempting to remove cultural barriers to the gospel. This will free the individual so as to provide the maximum opportunity for the Holy Spirit to demonstrate to her/him that the full revelation which has come in Jesus Christ is that for which the individual’s mythology/world view has been searching (Imasogie 1972:180, 255; 1980a:139–40; 1982:101–2, 114; cf. Casserley 1962:140).

18. Imasogie assumes that theologians and ministers also function as apologists (Imasogie 1986:86; 1972:xiii). In this assumption, he follows a dominant Baptist understanding of theology as a practical discipline intended to aid and enhance proclamation and evangelism.

For... “in the fulness of time”... God became enfleshed for the purpose of the full disclosure of Himself to His creatures. Like a ripple on the bank of the ocean those who initially apprehended the revelation became the media through which the whole world will come to the saving knowledge of and encounter with the Creator (Imasogie 1980a:138–9).

REFLECTIONS UPON IMASOGIE’S THEOLOGY OF CULTURE

One of the primary strengths of Imasogie’s theology is his emphasis upon the contextualization of theology *prior* to development of an apologetic. Too often evangelism focuses upon method without sufficient examination of the implications of the gospel for members of a given culture. Imasogie’s call for a theology addressed to the whole human represents a much needed word for many Western Christians who often view salvation in eschatological terms with little or no emphasis on present redemption. Imasogie’s incarnational theology seeks to address the existential concerns of the Nigerian by pointing to the all-sufficient work of the triune God.

Imasogie’s argument that general revelation is the result of the work of the cosmic Christ as it is apprehended by the cosmic God-consciousness through the filter of sin-tainted culture is a beneficial way to understand the relationship of Christianity and other religions. Those aspects of non-Christian religions in agreement with God’s revelation in Jesus Christ result from a proper apprehension of this revelation of the cosmic Christ. Similarly, those aspects approximating God’s revelation in Jesus Christ are, to varying degrees, misapprehensions of general revelation, and those aspects diametrically opposed to Christ, complete misapprehensions. Such a view of revelation is demonstrative of a basic continuity between creation and redemption. Imasogie’s understanding of the Christian’s response to culture also demonstrates this continuity. Although there is no aspect of our being, including culture, which is not affected by the fallen nature of humanity, God’s redemption in Christ is intended to extend to the whole human and the whole of culture.

Imasogie’s view that propositions are primarily preparatory to revelation is a needed response to those who would assert that divine revelation is propositional. Imasogie’s contention that all religions are responses to God’s preparation for divine revelation implies that revelation is primarily rela-

tional in nature rather than propositional.¹⁹ For Imasogie, propositional truths about God arise out of the relational experience of God's revelation rather than predicating that experience.

Although Imasogie's argument appreciates the truths found in other religions and emphasizes God's personality at work in revelation, Imasogie does not explain how his identification of Judaism as one of the religions which falls within this preparatory work squares with his assertion that the prophets kept the witness of God from degenerating in the same fashion as NTR. How were these prophets of Israel different from such prophetic reformers of other religions as Mohammed, Gautama Buddha, and Mahavira?²⁰ Also, it is unclear how Imasogie can follow Rust in allowing for a faint hint of grace within general revelation, yet state that the Law of Judaism, a medium of revelation fuller than that in other religions, brings only death (Imasogie 1975:17).

In addition, Imasogie states that the fate of the unevangelized should be left to divine wisdom, by which he means the discretion of God. Imasogie's argument for the cosmic Christ would be strengthened by linking this concept to the divine Wisdom of New Testament Sophia Christology. If one could properly respond to the work of the cosmic Christ, or Sophia, in general revelation, it would be a positive response to the same Christ who was historically revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. The author agrees with Imasogie, however, that the fate of these individuals who die prior to the coming of the good news of Jesus Christ must be left to the hands of divine Wisdom (Sophia).

19. This is illustrated in Imasogie's reaction to Emil Ludwig's statement cited by Wilhelm Schmidt (1931:191), "How can the untutored African conceive God? Deity is a philosophical concept which savages are incapable of framing." Imasogie responds that, "Deity is not a 'philosophical concept,' but a present living reality with whom man may have an I-thou relationship" (1973:288).

20. Interestingly, Imasogie has not addressed the religion of Islam at all in his writings, even though it is the dominant religion of the Northern region of Nigeria and claims a subsequent revelation to that of Jesus Christ. Imasogie's only reference is a passing comment made in his newest essay while discussing the rise of contextualized Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. "There is a rumor that the exclusion of one's religious identity from the personal data required in the recent national census is the government's attempt to conceal the fact that there are [now] more Christians in Nigeria than Muslims" (Imasogie 1997a: 46).

Osadolor Imasogie presents a powerful understanding of the impact of culture upon human perception of revelation and response to the gospel. He convincingly argues that the theologian must recognize her/his own cultural presuppositions as s/he develops her/his theology within her/his given culture in order to approximate "objectivity." This will allow the theologian to develop a theology which maximizes its incarnational relevancy to the members of the culture while it minimizes its syncretistic captivity to that culture. As this gospel is incarnated in the culture, the body of Christ will be able to reflect the image of her bridegroom with greater clarity. Others will then be drawn into the body as the dimness gives way to the increasing light of the glory of God in the face of Christ reflected in his bride (2 Cor 3:18-4:4).

REFERENCES

Casserley, J. V. Langmead

- 1951 *The Christian in Philosophy*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- 1957 "Theology and Apologetics." *Canadian Journal of Theology* 3 (October): 226-34.
- 1962 *Apologetics and Evangelism*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

Harris, Charles U.

- 1979 "Julian Victor Langmead Casserley: 1909-1978." *Anglican Theological Review* 61 (April): 160-1.

Idowu, E. Bolaji

- 1962 *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*. London: Longmans, Green & Co.
- 1965 *Towards an Indigenous Church*. The Students' Library no. 3. London: Oxford University Press.
- 1969 Introduction to *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs*, ed. by Kwesi A. Dickson and Paul Ellingworth, 9-16. London: Lutterworth Press.
- 1973 *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Imasogie, Osadolor

- 1972 "Langmead Casserley's Understanding of Christian Philosophy as a Basis for Apologetics." Th.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

- 1973 "African Traditional Religion and Christian Faith." *Review and Expositor* 70 (Summer): 283-93.
- 1975 *Studies in Second Corinthians* 1-6. Ibadan, Nigeria: Daystar Press.
- 1979 "The Apologetic Challenge of the Radical Theological Movement." In *Science, Faith and Revelation: An Approach to Christian Philosophy*, ed. by Bob E. Patterson, 167-97. Nashville: Broadman Press.
- 1980a "Christian Apologetic Theology in a West African Context." *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 7 (Spring): 129-44.
- 1980b *Olokun, the Divinity of Fortune*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Tokopa Enterprises.
- 1982 "The Person of Christ in a Secular World." In *Addresses and Papers: Baptist International Conference on Theological Education, Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, Ridgecrest, North Carolina, USA, January 14-17*, 91-121. [Washington, D.C.] : Baptist World Alliance.
- 1985 *African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan, Nigeria: University Press.
- 1986 *Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa*. Ibadan, Nigeria: University Press.
- 1987 "An African Christian View of Church Leadership and Polity." *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 2 (December): 11-8.
- 1988 "Biblical Theology of Reconciliation." *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 3 (December): 1-10.
- 1991 "The Influence of African Traditional Religious Ideas of Worship on the Christian Worship Practices in Nigeria." *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 6 (December): 17-23.
- 1992a "African Theology: The Development of Theological Thought in Nigeria." *Baptist Quarterly* 34 (October): 390-7.
- 1992b "A Christian Attitude to Cultural Revival." *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 7 (December): 1-12.
- 1997a "A Gospel for Nigerians." In *Contemporary Gospel Accents: Doing Theology in Africa, Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America*, ed. by Daniel Carro and Richard F. Wilson, 40-7. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.
- 1997b Interview by author, 20 March. Phone conversation. Fort Worth, TX to West Chester, PA.

Niebuhr, H. Richard

1951 *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper Torchbooks.

Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary

- 1979 "Inaugural Ceremonies and Installation of Rev. Dr. Osadolor Imasogie as Principal, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho on Friday, 17th August and Saturday, 18th August, 1979, Ogbomosho, Nigeria." Ibadan, Nigeria: Odu'a Printing Co.

Rust, Eric C.

- 1953 *Nature and Man in Biblical Thought*. London: Lutterworth Press.
- 1962 *Salvation History: A Biblical Interpretation*. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press.
- 1967 *Science and Faith: Towards a Theological Understanding of Nature*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schmidt, Wilhelm

- 1931 *The Origin and Growth of Religion: Facts and Theories*. Trans. H. J. Rose. New York: Dial Press.

Uwagboe, Dickson O.

- 1995 *Osadolor Imasogie: Life in the Service of God*. Benin City, Nigeria: Allied Press Services International.

Concordancia de palabras ugaríticas en morfología desplegada. Jesús-Luis Cunchillos and Juan-Pablo Vita. 3 volumes. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas and Institución Fernando el Católico, 1995, xxii and 2,786 pages.

For well over two decades interested persons (undoubtedly most of the population!) who needed to access a concordance of Ugaritic have relied on Richard E. Whitaker's *A Concordance of the Ugaritic Literature* (1972). Whitaker's work, in turn, was an almost unimaginable improvement over G. Douglas Young's *Concordance of Ugaritic*, published nearly two decades prior (1956). What Whitaker is to Young, the *Concordancia de Palabras Ugaríticas* (*CPU*) is to Whitaker. This massive, three volume work is nothing less than a morphological, keyword-in-context concordance to the entirety of the extant Ugaritic corpus. As such, *CPU* concords well over 1,300 texts preserved in the Ugaritic language.

To adequately assess this concordance one must start with the database and the larger context within which the work appears. *CPU* is the second installment of Part 1 (Datos Ugaríticos) of the series Banco de Datos Filológicos Semíticos Noroccidentales (*BDFSN*), conceived by Jesús-Luis Cunchillos, a well-known Ugaritologist and professor in the Instituto de Filología, Departamento de Filología Bíblica y de Oriente Antiguo of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Madrid). In brief, *BDFSN* is nothing short of a project to re-edit, concord morphologically (see below), concord by root, and then treat the syntax of all the major Northwest Semitic Languages: Ugaritic (Part 1); Phoenician and Punic (Part 2); Aramaic (Part 3); Hebrew (Part 4); and Amorite, Moabite, Ammonite, and Edomite (Part 5). In addition, a sixth, summary part is also planned, as is an offshoot monograph series.

This is obviously no small task, but the team responsible for the work is committed to the task and is making serious headway: The first installment of *BDFSN* Part 1 was *Textos Ugaríticos* (*TU*; 1993), a completely new edition of the Ugaritic text corpus along the lines of, yet with significant variation from, the standard text-base in the field. M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places* (*CAT*; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995). *CPU* appeared only two years later—all three volumes, 2,786 pages of it!

Since *CPU* is built on *TU*, and since *TU* is different from *CAT*, it will be useful to briefly compare the two text-bases, the one from Madrid with the one from Münster. The first thing one notices is that the two editions number the

texts differently. This is unfortunate and complicates the use of *CPU* if one is wanting to use it with *CAT*. Still, the numbers are close enough (generally *TU* has an additional prefix, in this case 00; hence, *TU* 00–1.1 = *CAT* 1.1) that one can usually use *CPU* with *CAT*, though a concordance of the numbering systems seems to be a logical and necessary future publication. *CAT* has some advantages insofar as it includes additional information regarding the texts that is not found in *TU* (excavation number, find spot, museum number, transliterations, photographs, etc.). *TU* has a clear advantage, however, in its presentation of uncertain characters (it uses the open circlet over the letter, typically used in Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship, rather than *CAT*'s often illegible use of roman [uncertain] vs. *italic* [certain] letters, which is the standard in Assyriology). Another clear advantage to the Madrid text-base is the fact that the numerous collations of tablets performed by scholars subsequent to 1976 (the date of the first edition of *CAT*) have been taken into consideration and, even if not followed, are listed separately. This is a huge improvement over *CAT*, which did not, evidently, take these collations into account (see D. Pardee's review of *CAT* in the *Journal of Semitic Studies* 42 [1997]:132–7). These collations have been helpfully listed in *TU*, pp. 859–66.

A detailed analysis of the differences between the two editions is obviously not possible here, but in comparing the two editions of 1.23, I discovered that in many places *TU* was superior, correctly reading what was erroneous in *CAT* (e.g., *TU* 00–1.23:53 reads *šḥr* rather than *CAT* 1.23 line 53's incorrect *šhr*; cf. similarly lines 60, 61, and 64).

It should go without saying that the advantages of *TU* carry over into *CPU*. The presentation of uncertain consonants, the additional—often different—readings of the collations, and so forth are all present. Each concorded word is also provided with a number and the total number of occurrences is indicated. The final datum for each entry is a cross-reference to incomplete (i.e., broken) words or portions of words that may, in fact, relate to (or be) the word in question (e.g., *ttph*, no. 6519 is cross-referenced to *-tp-* and *tt-*). These broken words or portions of words are then concorded in three separate appendices: restorable graphemic chains, one-letter graphemic chains (possible to restore, but with a large number of options), and unrestorable graphemic chains. These appendices are helpful, even if in some cases the number of possible restorations is quite large. Equally as often, however, the suggestions indicated are quite manageable. For example, the concorded entry for *tt-* includes nine options (*tt*, *ttb*, *ttḏ*, *tty*, *ttk*, *ttm*, *ttph*, *ttt*, and *tttm*). *CPU*

concludes with an index of the main concordance and of each of the three appendixes, as well as an index of the collations used.

If *CPU* has a major drawback it is that it is a “morphologically displayed” or graphic concordance. This means that words are concorded as they appear morphologically or graphically in the texts, not according to their roots. So, epigraphic homonymns such as *bt* (“daughter”) and *bt* (“house”) are not differentiated in this concordance but instead are listed together. Furthermore, the addition of various prefixes or conjunctions (or even, in certain cases, suffixes) means that an instance of the root in question will be concorded in different places (e.g., the word *bt* may also be found under *bbt* “in the house” or under *wbt* “and the daughter,” which, unfortunately, would have to be tracked down through the seventy-seven pages of entry under *w!*). The value of such a concordance, however, is that the texts are allowed to stand as they are, without assumption of and assignment to roots that are not always certain to say the least. Graphic concordances such as *CPU* are also extremely valuable when attempting the difficult work of restoration—the three appendixes mentioned above will further aid scholars in this complicated, but necessary task.

A few notes in closing:

(1) *CPU* is only the first of two Ugaritic concordances that will appear in *BDFSN*. The second (projected sometime in 1998 or 1999) will be a concordance of roots (*Concordancia de raíces ugaríticas*)—the standard concordance type. Still, until that second concordance is published, Whitaker’s concordance remains the standard—at least for the major texts and for those seeking a concordance of roots—two decades notwithstanding.

(2) *CPU* actually represents an advance over *TU* insofar as it includes a supplement published in *Sefarad* 54 (1994):143–50.

(3) The *BDFSN* team has an email address listed in the introduction to *CPU*: cunchillos@cc.csic.es. Through this medium, the *BDFSN* team—and in particular José M. Galán—was kind enough to inform me about their website (<http://www.labherm.filol.csic.es>), which includes, among other things, an Ugaritic Data Bank for both Macintosh and IBM-compatible machines. In addition, they were kind enough to provide me with the electronic version of *TU* (which includes the supplement from *Sefarad*) and a CD-ROM (Macintosh) that contains the Ugaritic corpus together with applications to generate concordances, possible restorations of incomplete graphemic chains, and so forth. These items are also available for purchase and consti-

tute invaluable resources for any scholar seriously interested in the study of Ugaritic literature.

The “conceptor” of the *BDFSN* (Cunchillos), along with his team (especially Juan-Pablo Vita, coauthor of *CPU*), has undertaken an enormous and exciting (though not completely enviable!) assignment. They are to be congratulated on the major strides and advances they have made in the field. When complete, their work will undoubtedly put many an Old Testament scholar and Orientalist in its debt. In fact, it already has. So, here’s to their project and to the hopes that it is completed as soon as (humanly!) possible.

– BRENT A. STRAWN

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Hans Frei and Karl Barth: Different Ways of Reading Scripture. By David E. Demson. Eerdmans, 1997, 116 pages.

David Demson’s *Hans Frei and Karl Barth: Different Ways of Reading Scripture* is an analysis of the hermeneutical methods of two significant twentieth century theologians. Demson focuses his attention on a comparison of their interpretations of the gospel narratives dealing with the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. By paying careful attention to this particular subject area, he is able to draw out interesting similarities and differences between the theologians in terms of their reading of scripture. His primary contention is that, while Barth and Frei are similar in their basic approach to hermeneutics, the latter lacks a necessary emphasis on the place of the disciples in the identity and mission of Christ. This failure causes Frei to lack a proper understanding of inspiration and opens a gap in his reading of scripture as a whole.

Demson, a professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Toronto’s Emmanuel College, comes to this project with an appreciation for both theologians, but with a specific interest in Barth—he serves as the general secretary of the Karl Barth Society of North America. While this background perhaps removes him from being a totally unbiased interpreter, it also points to his qualifications for undertaking such a task. Demson obviously is deeply familiar with the writings of both Barth and Frei, and he is careful and thorough in presenting the material.

Doing a comparative study of Barth and Frei, as the author notes, makes for an interesting and important project. Frei has great respect for Barth and

is a careful student of his thought. Frei also is a major figure in hermeneutics, and one who likely learned much from Barth's hermeneutical approach. Barth, for his part, is also a significant interpreter of scripture, one who "has undertaken more biblical exposition than any other major theologian of the century" (p. vi). Thus, by displaying the hermeneutical approaches of the two theologians and drawing implications from that comparison, Demson's project is significant.

Demson divides his book into four chapters, each of which overlaps and interrelates with the others. He is attempting to provide insight into the theologians' interpretation of the gospel story from different perspectives or angles, so that each chapter draws on the ideas of the previous ones and together expands the argument further. The first chapter deals with the stages of the gospel story. He notes that both Barth and Frei use a three-stage framework for understanding the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ, but that the stages do not correspond exactly. Barth's stages are Christ's Galilean ministry, his entry into and death in Jerusalem, and his period of the ascension. For Frei, the stages are Jesus' birth/infancy, his ministry in Galilee, and the events from the entry in Jerusalem to the ascension.

Within these stages, while Barth and Frei generally agree interpretively, they also differ significantly. Barth stresses Christ's activity in gathering, supporting, and sending the apostles as central to his identity as the divine one. From his ministry in Galilee through the period of the ascension, Christ understood his role as the unique Son as involving the disciples, who would carry on his work in his name. Frei discussed the stages of the gospels with emphasis on the themes of identity/enactment and power/powerlessness. Christ, by his obedience to God's will, showed a defined and enacted identity. This obedience builds through the narrative and the stages, leading him toward his inevitable death. Christ's power shifts more to powerlessness in the passion narrative, yet in that powerlessness Christ is depicted as the identified presence of God.

The second chapter moves beyond the stages of the gospel to a discussion of the definiteness of the gospel. Both Frei and Barth reject a mythological type of interpretation, choosing instead to follow a narrative reading of the text. From this, they avoid interpreting the Christ event in general or abstract terms, seeing it instead in a focused and specific manner. The core of the gospel accounts is the definite presence of God as identified in the specific man Jesus of Nazareth. As Demson notes, the theologians emphasize that "Jesus is depicted as a specific, self-focused, unsubstitutable person" (p. 25). Yet Frei

and Barth differ at a key point in their discussion of the definiteness of Jesus. For Barth, this definiteness involved a definite and self-identified connection with the disciples. Jesus is not to be interpreted apart from their specific place as ones appointed and commissioned. Frei largely lacks this emphasis.

The third chapter, on the definiteness of Christ's presence, draws this distinction further. Barth's understanding of that presence in light of the calling, upholding, and commissioning of the disciples correlates to his understanding of the church as the gathered, supported, and commissioned community. Christ's definite presence in relation to the disciples links with Christ's definite presence now in relation to the church. Frei's lack of attention to Jesus' identity in relation to the disciples opens a gap in his interpretation of the gospel that affects his understanding of Christ's presence now.

The final and largest chapter deals with Barth and Frei on the subject of reading scripture. It draws together the threads of the previous chapters with a particular focus on the doctrine of inspiration. Through a careful examination of their readings of the gospel narratives, Demson argues that Frei fails adequately to connect the message of the text with the hearers/readers of the text. The concept of inspiration, which receives significant attention in Barth and is connected to his understanding of the identity between Christ and his followers, receives inadequate attention in Frei's thought.

Demson obviously has done careful research into the hermeneutical methods of Barth and Frei, and he is able to articulate this material in a clear and coherent manner. His work is at one and the same time both simple and complex. It is simple in that he attends to only the single area of the theologians' interpretation of scripture, and to one primary area where they disagree. It is complex in that both Barth and Frei are sophisticated and complicated thinkers whose ideas are difficult to summarize in a small book. Demson succeeds well in grasping and communicating the substance of their thought.

Scholars of both Barth and Frei, as well as in the larger field of hermeneutics, will certainly find this book to be a significant contribution to academic research. Demson's book also will be useful in a seminary setting, particularly for courses in the areas of philosophy of religion and systematic theology. This is so because, while the work is focused on the interpretation of scripture, it has implications for such areas as revelation, Christology, and ecclesiology.

— JOHN DAVID JAEGER
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

Heretics: The Other Side of Early Christianity. By Gerd Lüdemann. Translated by John Bowden. Westminster John Knox Press, 1996, xvi and 335 pages.

From his earlier books on Paul (1984, 1989), Acts (1989) and the Resurrection (1994) to his latest book on the Virgin Birth (1998), Göttingen Professor of New Testament and Jesus Seminar member Gerd Lüdemann has been controversial because of his challenge to widely accepted Christian beliefs. *Heretics: The Other Side of Early Christianity* is no exception to Lüdemann's body of work. This book is a synthesis that extends his prior work to form a historical reconstruction of the character of Christianity in the first two centuries. In Lüdemann's view the orthodox story as enshrined in canon and creed has excluded the story of the other side of Christianity and has thus obscured the picture of Jesus. Although a harsh critic of Christianity as an institution, he sees himself as helping Christians be faithful to Jesus. He is critical of the way that faith claims have dictated the direction of scholarship, particularly in Germany (pp. 4–8). For example, he argues that the presupposition that God intervenes in history is "quite simply outrageous" (p. 7) and that the content of the Apostles' Creed has become "incredible or incomprehensible" and should therefore be abandoned (pp. 190–2). These things he wants to eliminate "to direct attention once again to Jesus, out of the conviction that the Christianity of all times *must* be able to take up a relationship to Jesus of Nazareth if it is to be credible" (p. xvi).

Lüdemann places *Heretics* in the tradition of Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy* (1934, second enlarged edition 1964, English edition 1964 with additional material 1971) without blindly accepting all of Bauer's project. Two important advances Lüdemann sees himself making are first of all establishing how the later Christian expressions displaced the earlier ones, and secondly considering the finds from Nag Hammadi (pp. 9–12). Whereas Bauer went through the fourth century and ranged systematically over the Mediterranean, Lüdemann starts with Jesus' death and concludes with the end of the second century, focusing on the conflicts between Jewish Christianity centered in Jerusalem and emerging Pauline Christianities.

Lüdemann has targeted the book for "specialists," but with a view to making it accessible to "lay people" (p. xiii). Giving extensive endnotes rather than footnotes helps achieve this objective. At appropriate points the endnotes feature excursions on the state of research for a number of subjects that come up in his discussion, including Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, Jewish Christianity in Jerusalem, Paul, and false attribution within early

Christian writings. Additionally, the book is well laid out with ten chapters, appendices, a bibliography, end notes and indices of authors and subjects. The detailed table of contents gives the titles and page numbers of chapters, subdivisions within chapters and a listing of the excursus title with the note number. Unfortunately the subject index is not very detailed.

The first chapter is the introduction wherein Lüdemann discusses his source critical methodology and his intention to judge documents without dogmatic and canonical bias. He frames his work over and against three approaches to earliest Christianity from which the approach of his book “polemically stands apart...” (p. 2). These approaches are a “Word of God theology,” a “kerygmatic theology,” and attempts to combine “historical-critical work with a salvation-historical view” (p. 3).

In chapter 2 Lüdemann begins at the end of the second century with an examination of the Irenaeus’ *Adversus Omnes Haereses* and Tertullian’s *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*. Next are a series of chapters that tackle Paul and his legacy. The context is set in Chapter 3, “How the Heresiologists Became Heretics,” which considers the evidence regarding early Christianity from Josephus, Acts, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and the Pseudo-Clementines. It argues that Jewish Christianity centered in Jerusalem was the normative form of Christianity which saw Paul as deviating from the norm and sought to correct, limit and overturn Paul’s teachings and Paul’s churches. Paul on the other hand is portrayed as being open and accepting of different forms of Christianity.

This line of argument is continued into Chapter 4, “The Only Heretic of the Earliest Period, or, A Human Paul,” which focuses on the Pauline letters. Taking Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, I Thessalonians, and Philemon to be from Paul, the six remaining allegedly Pauline letters in the canon he arranges in different classes of false attribution. These are the basis for Chapter 5, “Heresies over the Legacy of Paul,” to which he adds the non-canonical Letter to Rheginos and III Corinthians. This is his boldest and most speculative chapter. One of the more interesting and debatable claims that he makes is that II Thessalonians is a forgery that accuses I Thessalonians of being a forgery with the intent of displacing it. The rest of the pseudo-Pauline writings he designates Left-wing—Colossians, Ephesians and the Letter to Rheginos, in which the key concern is gnosis; or Right-wing—Titus, I and II Timothy and also III Corinthians, where the focus is on the church. The significance of gnosis, canon, and church structure in the Pauline tradition that is brought into focus by these documents is re-

lated to the crisis caused by Marcion and his influence; this is continued in Chapter 6 where it is argued that it is largely in reaction to Marcion's canon which rejected the Old Testament and included only the Gospel of Luke and seven letters from Paul that the Christian canon was formed. Lüdemann then moves to three shorter chapters, "Heresies in the Johannine Writings," "The Origin of the Apostles' Creed" and "The Origin of the New Testament Canon," while the last chapter offers a summary, review and revision of the picture of Jesus in light of the study.

Heretics reads well, at points like a good detective novel, but this same quality made me often skeptical. It is an engaging historical reconstruction but at times the author seems to be stretching his conclusions beyond what his evidence will support. For example, there is his above mentioned claim regarding the authorship of II Thessalonians. And although he rejects Hans Von Campenhausen's claim that Polycarp is the author of the Pastorals, he does write that "there can be no longer any doubt that both authors derive from one and the same milieu" (p. 141).

Another problem worth noting is that little use is made of the Nag Hammadi material. This is surprising and disappointing. His work with The Letter to Rheginos is insightful but the Nag Hammadi material has so much to offer a reconceptualization of second century Christianity that it is unfortunate that he did not give attention to more of the writings. One place to begin reading on this subject would be the collection of essays in *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism and Early Christianity*, edited by C. W. Hedrick and R. Hodgson, 1986. Nevertheless what Lüdemann does provide in *Heretics* is worthy of careful reading. His radical claims call scholars, particularly of New Testament, Christian history and theology, as well as lay people to reconsider their assumptions about the past, present, and future of the Christian tradition.

- HORACE SIX-MEANS
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation: A Reader on Theology and Christian Education. Edited by Jeff Astley, Leslie J Francis, and Colin Crowder. W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996, 464 pages.

Welcome to the community of scholars! Astley, Francis and Crowder have invited all interested parties to a veritable church social of theological think-

ers in this trilogy's second volume, *Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation: A Reader on Theology and Christian Education*. This volume has much to offer someone interested in overhearing conversations at the social, yet I'm less certain that these editors have accomplished their "hope both to advance the quality of scholarly debate about Christian education and to promote good practice and practical applications" (vii). *Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation* provides an introductory structure through which one may meet some of the most influential contributors to the field of Christian education, yet the editorial organization and commentary on these articles suggest a rather limited perspective on formation, Christian or otherwise.

The overall structure of the book supplies a manageable and quite workable scaffolding within which a newcomer may begin to build important concepts. The first section, "Theology and Christian education theory," establishes a theoretical foundation for what will follow. "Theological foundations" allows the traditional categories of bible and church to support further understanding. The remaining categories—"Theological approaches," "Spiritual formation," and "Theological education"—supplement this basic structure with roughly hewn areas of discussion. There are undoubtedly more areas, but they articulate some large ones apparent today. Summary paragraphs introducing each section and each article are given to aid the reader. In the editors' goal of being comprehensive, they certainly provide an immense amount of stated information.

For those interested in the incredible variety of Christian education theory, *Theological Perspectives* also introduces numerous authors, only some of whom will be named here. First, we are given a general overview of Christian education (nuanced by Jack L. Seymour, Karl Ernst Nipkow, Edward Farley and James Michael Lee) which sensitizes the reader to the interconnectedness of major approaches and the various challenges in the integration of those approaches with larger society. Amidst the topic of bible and church as theological foundations, we are next introduced to Walter Brueggemann, Stanley Hauerwas, and Craig R. Dykstra, each of whom hints at the sometimes unpredictable or non-systematic contributions made to education there. Lucien Richard, Paulo Freire and Mary Elizabeth Moore identify some of the struggles with issues of identity, critical interpretation, history, culture and gender in solidly theological Christian education. George Lindbeck, Charles M. Wood, and James E. Loder, among others, attend to spiritual formation in the worshiping community and in ministerial

education (categories determined by the editors). Some of the most provocative voices heard in the theological education debate—Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, Rebecca Chopp, David Tracy, Charles Wood—are also given voice here. Finally, the bibliography, while not extensive, provides a complementary source for “hot-spot” attention. As a place to learn a little about a contributor’s thought and style, I recommend the volume as a good beginning. So many solid thinkers, so little time, and Astley, Francis and Crowder have offered us a compendium of sources for about two decades’ theological contributors to Christian educational thought.

Upon critical consideration of the editors’ stated hope to advance the quality of scholarly debate about Christian education and to promote good practice and practical applications, my evaluation is more reserved. I suspect *Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation* will be out of the interest range for the laity of the church and that the actual organization and commentary on this remarkable collection of scholarship will more often hinder clear debate. Advancing good scholarly conversation requires, I believe, a tightly argued mode of presentation and clearly marked lines of communication between conversation partners. Those entering the conversation, perhaps for the first time, need to know who has been talking with whom, why, and for how long or in what historical context. The editors here, however, took a survey and the resulting nominations of journal articles by a board of international scholars. Variety is at a premium, but editorial distinction—clarification of detail, nuances of terminology, schools of thought—is not. As such, good practice finds little promotion either. Laity of the faith community will struggle to apply such technical, variously defined information to daily life and blossoming scholars will pay less attention to realistic and necessary modes of scholarly argumentation. Practical application is even more difficult. The word curriculum appears explicitly in just one article and not at all in the index. Admittedly, practical application presents one of the toughest challenges for such a broadly aimed theological perspective, but parishioners and Christian educators alike will struggle, I believe, with finding immediate uses for a large portion of this reader.

With all that said, I find *Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation* to be an introductory resource for someone intent on delving deeply into the most recent theological reflections on Christian education. The gathering of scholars is a good one, the articles give a light sampling of topics and styles, and a suitable variety exists in these pages for such a beginning search. The editors have indeed competently addressed their aim of making these ar-

ticles more readily accessible—a daunting task which deserves many thanks. Beyond the scope of this volume, however, lies a realm of tightly defined terms, clear conversations between these same passionate participants and perhaps more editorial justice done to the complex commentary of the subject. Church socials do serve their own purpose of introducing people and starting conversations—just as this one does—but unless the conversations can be heard and heard clearly, participants won't stay for long. And such would be a shame for the fascinating realm which is theologically reflective Christian education.

– LISA E. HESS

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Piety and Power: Muslims and Christians in West Africa. By Lammin Sanneh. Orbis Books, 1997, xiii and 207 pages.

Things fall apart because the center cannot hold. West African society is often depicted in these terms to underscore the lack of cohesion that was the product of the colonial redefinition of traditional societies. As a result of this complex process of redefinition political differences are so pronounced that finding an agreed vocabulary for social discourse is difficult. The relationship between Christianity and Islam is a major part of this story. In this new work by Lammin Sanneh this relationship is explored in order to find politically viable and morally credible resources for the construction of a respectable public discourse relevant to contemporary West African society. Sanneh is acutely conscious of the ways in which the compound realities of Islamic civilization, Western Christianity and European colonialism were transformed by indigenous African cultural practices. Yet his project goes beyond a simple elucidation of this complex dynamic in order to find points of solidarity and continuity between these divergent traditions—points necessary for cultural compatibility and inter-group solidarity. As such, this work can be read as an exercise in cross-cultural as well as interfaith dialogue. The author provides a case for the compatibility of specific Islamic intellectual traditions with a particular Western Christian informed political experiment, namely democratic liberalism, in order to highlight possibilities for mutual cooperation.

Sanneh's project rests on three crucial pillars. First, it rests on a sophisticated understanding of the complex relationship between religion and poli-

tics. By illustrating the difficulty in the privatized notion of religion that has heavily influenced Western culture and politics, he provides a framework for ultimate value-setting that traverses and transcends every department of public life. Drawing from European philosophers such as Locke, and Christian and Islamic philosophers such as Ibn Khaldun, Sanneh makes a case for the role and status of religion in the formation of public life. In Sanneh's view, religion alone has the moral facility to construe and confer values of right and wrong and therefore maintains the power to delineate the contours of morality which are necessary for the right ordering of the public life of a people or community. This allows Sanneh to argue for a basis for human rights. In his view one simply cannot construct human rights discourse without a religious vocabulary sophisticated enough to preserve the sacredness of the individual. Secular notions of rights simply are insufficient because they lead either to a debilitating individualism that renders the person atomistic and abstracted from community, or to a suffocating collectivism that suffuses the inviolable dignity of the person into a homogeneous mass.

Second, Sanneh investigates and illumines the ways in which Islamic public law can influence politics without being co-opted for political ends, subsumed under bureaucratic apparatuses, or exploited by militaristic campaigns. In other words, he provides an intellectual defense for Islamic philosophical fecundity and intellectual flexibility, resources necessary for anti-fundamentalist and non-essentialist readings of the Qur'an and requisite for the creation of durable discursive and dialogic space necessary for inter-religious conversation. In this way, Sanneh respects the distinct yet interdependent domains of religion and politics, domains that escape both the pitfalls of the Western tendency to relegate religion to the private sphere on the one hand and Islamic religious chauvinism based on politics on the other. This allows Sanneh to lay the groundwork for a viable and credible public theology that is based on political liberalism, ethnic pluralism, cultural diversity and religious freedom; one that sustains the separation of religion and government as a necessary ingredient for credible public participation in societal formation. The critical cooperation of these two spheres then preserves the sanctity of the individual, prevents the political machinery from encroaching upon the religious space, and protects the political apparatus from religious manipulation.

Third, Sanneh's work corrects certain assumptions about Islamic intellectual history as well as about Christian missionary activity in Africa. By showing the broad progress that Islamic and Christian traditions have made in

Africa and the invigorating ways in which they have helped to construct, reform and transform the African cultural setting, he provides an Islamic religion that is less dogmatic, more self-critical, and sufficiently intellectual. He offers a healthy, subtle and balanced perspective on the relationships between Christianity and Islam as foreign religions. Sanneh shows how the encounter between these two religious orientations developed into a dynamic and creative process transforming indigenous African culture, though it was not always a harmonious religious fusion. In his view, all three have influenced one another in areas of social practice, theological teaching and the formation of public policy on practical, prophetic and intellectual levels.

Sanneh's main weakness in his third pillar is his sole reliance on the Shari'ah code as an Islamic source for inter-religious dialogue. He ignores the inflexible feature of Shari'ah law as constituted by its apostatic dimension, whereby an individual may be punished by death in any given Islamic state for adhering to impressions or interpretations of Islam that do not abide the majority tendency. Owing to its language of apostasy, Shari'ah can be used, as it has been utilized in the past, for gross acts of political repression and militarist exploitation. Seen in this way, certain aspects of Shari'ah law conflict with aspects of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* which allow for the freedom of religious expression, and are incommensurable with certain modern notions of human rights, international law and constitutional democracy.

Moreover, Sanneh says relatively little about the ways in which traditional African cultural practices inform the public conversation with regard to the relationship between Church and state. Such a move would be warranted not only because these religions have shaped and historically informed the world view of indigenous Africans, but also because a considerable number of West Africans still adhere to them and, as such, they constitute both religious and political identity. The attempt to construct a pluralistic and tolerant society must first create the communicative mechanisms and discursive space for such constituencies. Otherwise we run the risk of fomenting religious and cultural annihilation.

In addition, Sanneh does not fully explore the ways in which prophetic enactments from both the Muslim and Christian sectors transform the African cultural setting. The issue is not simply to revive and rehabilitate public life in West Africa but to create the space in which more constituencies and identities can gain access to the sources of power and privilege and knowledge. These prophetic practices are necessary to draw from, as both religious traditions creatively engage and selectively affirm the world and yet harbor

strong suspicions toward worldly values, outlooks and lifestyles. In other words, they provide moral criteria necessary to construe and contest key aspects of the modern as well as indigenous African cultural practices.

Finally, though Sanneh illumines a non-literalistic dimension of Islamic law, one may still harbor reservations about Islam's theological pluralism. Are there elements within Islamic theology that allow it to discourse on the level of ultimate reality? Or are we simply forced to rely on historicism and particularistic renderings of the Islamic codes, as Sanneh does? What resources are there within Islamic theology that allow difference and others to be recognized through theological reflection? In other words, can principled democracy gain ascendancy in Islamic ethical discourse, as has been the case in Christian intellectual discourse, or will the exigencies of time and space dash away this fundamental norm? This assertion of a universal moral law belies a complex argument; such a universal morality is not self-evident. The claim must take seriously our plurality, the realities of multi-contextual and multi-cultural grounds of interpretation of law and justice, and the dynamics of social location. Whatever commonalties of moral law we achieve may be more the fruit of dialogue and negotiation than the givens of the world religions.

Sanneh's project is both ambitious and appealing. It is ambitious because it seeks to create discursive and dialogic space among historical groups whose religious rhetoric is increasingly being politicized to propagate a politics of intolerance. Yet herein lies its practical and theoretical value. Sanneh weaves personal experience into his vocational, intellectual work and shows how his encounter with Islamic and Christian missionaries revealed to him possibilities for transcendence and exchange. This critical exploration of personal religious formation, family upbringing and academic training highlights the unique sensibility Sanneh brings to his proposed project of inter-religious exchange and cross-cultural fertilization. As such it will be widely read and discussed by theologians, social ethicists, mission theorists, cultural anthropologists, historians, political scientists, as well as pastors and political pundits concerned about societal reconstruction in West Africa.

— TOKUNBO ADELEKAN
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Papacy and the People of God. Edited by Gary MacEoin. Orbis Books, 1998, 160 pages.

In the 1995 encyclical, *Ut unum sint*, John Paul II called for “a search for a manner of exercising the primacy that would be open to a new situation” (p. 40). The eleven contributors to *The Papacy and the People of God* discuss the problems which are now plaguing the papacy, their history, and the manner in which the primacy should be exercised in the future. The problems and solutions can be separated into two groups. A central problem for all of these authors is the over-centralization of papal authority today, its solution being a true collegiality, beginning with the bishops and moving through the church which was defined as “the People of God” during Vatican II. The second problem is that of neoliberal capitalism and colonialism which the church has been supporting for far too long. The solution offered is a desacralization of neoliberal ideology, a restructuring of the church on a more collegial basis, and a pope who respects and listens to liberation theology and supports inculturation.

The editor, Gary MacEoin, begins his introduction by stating that the issues which these essays analyze are best raised under a stable papacy, and that they “are less about the person and style of the present incumbent than about the system built up over centuries within which he functions” (p. vii). While this is true, one ends with an image of two popes held in the balance, the present charismatic John Paul II, and the saintly John XXIII. The images of these two men keep reappearing as examples of the right and wrong way to be pope in these essays which all deal with the shape of the papacy if the church is to thrive in the 3rd millennium. Alain Woodrow, religion editor of *Le Monde* and editor of *Informations Catholiques Internationales*, is particularly specific in his criticisms of the present pope: “John Paul is self-assured, convinced of his ‘divine mission,’ and determined to drag the church—kicking and screaming if need be—into his vision of the twenty-first century, a vision shaped by his Polish ecclesiology and sustained by his theological certainties... the qualities he admires, such as obedience, discipline, Marian piety, and powerful ecclesiastical institutions capable of standing up to the secular state, are obviously the ones he knew in his native Poland, qualities he also finds in the ‘muscular’ Christianity practiced by *Opus Dei*, *Communione e Liberazione*, the *Focolari*, and the neo-catechetical movement” (pp. 83–4). While Woodrow is the most biting in his criticism of John Paul II, all the authors criticize the growth of the Roman curia’s power under his reign, as well as his many au-

thoritarian decisions which go against the spirit of the church. Several of the authors describe the elation and hope which they felt under the papacy of John XXIII and Vatican Council II. John Wilkins, editor of *The Tablet* of London, became a Catholic shortly after Vatican II and one feels his sorrow as the vision has faded under John Paul II's authoritarian rule.

Many of the articles include a short history of the papacy, which will be quite helpful to those readers who are vague on when and why papal infallibility, collegiality and papal primacy came about. Paul Collins' and Alain Woodrow's articles are particularly good for this. *Haec sancta*, a key document from the Council of Constance (1414–1418), is critical in discussing the future of the papacy as it states that the Council represents the whole church and that its power comes immediately from Christ so that even the pope is bound to obey it. The popular perception today, among Catholics as well as non-Catholics, is that the pope equals the church. While this is true neither to tradition nor to theology as Paul Collins, an Australian priest and historian, makes clear, it represents what is actually happening as the pope takes on more power and eliminates checks and balances. *Pastor Aeternus* (18 July 1870) sets out both the doctrine of infallibility and that of papal primacy. The contributors agree that the doctrine of infallibility does not need to be changed, merely authentically interpreted. Papal primacy is seen as a more problematic issue, for it must be understood as primacy of service, not of jurisdiction, as has often been the case.

The question of the role of the Synod of Bishops vis-à-vis the Roman curia is central to almost all of the articles in this book. In 1980 the Synod of Bishops decided that the Roman Catholic Church should take the Orthodox stance in terms of divorce. Throwing collegiality out the window, John Paul II decided that divorce was never acceptable. This is one of the many examples given to show that the present papacy is ignoring Vatican II's declaration that the church views itself "explicitly as a synodal or collegial structure" (p. 18). Most of the articles call for the disbanding of the Roman curia and the empowerment of the Bishop's Synod. In order for the bishops truly to represent the people, however, the pope must first end the practice of naming them himself, a right which only dates back to the 19th century. John Wilkins imagines the next pope proclaiming: "Henceforward, executive authority must be shown by structural expression to belong not to the pope and the curia, but to the pope and the synod" (p. 126).

Another issue which is of great importance for the future of the papacy is the pope's role in politics and global economics. Giancarlo Zizola, dean of

Vaticanologists at Rome, argues that the pope's position as head of state makes for a lack of symmetry between the Roman Catholic church and other Christian churches, and he calls for an abolition of the whole papal politico-diplomatic apparatus. Alain Woodrow goes farther, dreaming of the abolishment of the Vatican as an independent state and the transfer of the papal residence to the diocesan church of Rome (p. 87). Ana María Ezcurra, an Argentinian psychologist, traces the history of papal involvement in capitalistic ideology. She notes that John Paul's open acceptance of capitalism as a model is an innovation. Ezcurra argues that the neoliberal capitalism which the pope supports is a causal factor in poverty and that human and natural life must become the ultimate and exclusive objective of development. Pablo Richard, a professor of theology in Costa Rica, argues for an alternative model to globalization in which the church adopts the logic of inculturation through the power of liberation theology.

This collection of essays should be of interest to anyone concerned with the future of the Church. While most of the contributors are Catholic, their ideas and insights are useful for anyone interested in Catholicism. Although the ratio of lay to clergy contributors is balanced, the ratio of women to men is not, and one cannot help but wonder if the emphasis would have been different had women predominated. While several of the articles make oblique comments about the issue of women's ordination and role in the church, only Joan Chittister in "Women in the Church: A New Pentecost in Process" really discusses this issue, calling for the institutionalization of women's ecclesiastical leadership, the recognition of the theological and spiritual insights of women, and the use of feminine language in speech about God. As far as the geographical distribution of the authors is concerned, it is terribly one-sided. The contributors are largely northern and even within this category the scales are weighted as six of the contributors are Anglo-Saxon, while three are from Western Europe. Does living in predominantly Protestant cultures affect the way in which the Anglo-Saxon contributors read the problems and solutions of the papacy? The south is represented by two Latin Americans. While the Latin American church is of great importance to the church of the 3rd millennium, it would have been interesting to hear what the African and Asian churches have to say about the future of the papacy. Are their concerns and dreams for the next pope the same?

— MARIANNE M. DELAPORTE
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, The Father of Hate Radio. By Donald Warren. The Free Press, 1996, iv and 202 pages.

Sociologist-anthropologist Donald Warren makes a useful contribution to our understanding of the career of Father Charles Coughlin, the Catholic priest from Canada whose name became a synonym for modern American demagoguery. Appointed to a suburban parish outside Detroit, the ambitious and charismatic Coughlin began making regular local radio broadcasts in 1926 from WJR, a station soon to be affiliated with the new CBS network. At first these religious broadcasts were as uncontroversial as they could have been in a profoundly anti-Catholic era. In the terrible wake of the crash of 1929, however, Coughlin turned toward radical themes, attacking both the menace of communism and the ravages of finance capitalism, always with greater passion than coherence. As Coughlin's "Hour of Power" was picked up by more and more stations, a new and unpredictable national political movement, Coughlin's National Union for Social Justice, arose. Initially a fervent supporter of the New Deal, Coughlin was instrumental in the election of Franklin Roosevelt. While happy to profit from the energies of this populist surge, the Roosevelt administration distrusted its volatility and kept its leader at arm's length. Coughlin, wounded by this exclusion, made a definitive break with the New Deal in 1936 and began introducing themes of radical antisemitism into his political discourses. An attempt to fashion his following into a third political party was a failure, and his mass influence waned. Coughlin hung on as a public figure, the leader of a virulent proto-fascist minority movement, until silenced by the Catholic hierarchy in 1942.

The best aspects of *Radio Priest* address the later part of Coughlin's career and his drift toward the outermost fringes of U.S. politics. Exploiting new information from recently declassified FBI files, the archives of the Catholic Church, and interviews with surviving Coughlin associates, Warren traces the radio priest's connections with an international rogue's gallery of fascists and fascist sympathizers. The same historical sources have enabled Warren to shed light on Coughlin's seditious connections with the Axis regimes of Germany and Italy, and to document the details of a deal cut quietly between the U.S. Department of Justice and the Catholic Church to muzzle Coughlin without the risky resort to a public treason trial. The book is also strong on personal detail, illuminating some unsuspected Coughlin tastes for sports cars and the stock market. A young deacon who met Coughlin in 1970 recounts how Coughlin bent over the roof of his Thunderbird to scribble down

a stock tip for him, recommending that he invest in a new fast food venture called Wendy's (p. 48).

Less satisfying is Warren's attempt at a historical revision of the consensus view of Coughlin, which interprets his antisemitic turn as "a bitter, irrational, and desperate gamble to reclaim a lost popularity after the poor showing of the Union party in 1936" (p. 132). Toward this end Warren has sifted through Coughlin's private life and public utterances, seeking to backdate his antipathy toward Jews. Warren's analyses of Coughlin's radio sermons of the early 1930's cannot support the full weight of his revisionist claims. Coughlin's stock phrase, "international bankers," may have been intended as a "code word" (p. 133) to mask an antisemitic agenda present from the start, but it matters how that code was understood, a point underlined by the recognized participation of substantial numbers of Jews in the Coughlinite movement. Warren undermines his own position with the information that a business consultant named Gertrude Coogan was instrumental in indoctrinating Coughlin in antisemitic conspiracy theory, for her entry into Coughlin's life appears to belong to the later, post-1934 period (p. 142).

The interpretive backwardness of this effort to insert a rigid and constant core of antisemitism into Coughlin's protean politics is revealed by how little else the author has to say about the Coughlinite ideology and its possible meanings. Anti-oligopolistic, socialistic, conservatively communitarian, nationalistic, isolationist, occupying no fixable position on the traditional Left-Right spectrum, Coughlin's politics require broader, more nuanced analysis, and on this count *Radio Priest* cannot measure up to Alan Brinkley's excellent tandem biography of Coughlin and Huey Long, *Voices of Protest* (1982).

A second, related problem stems from its determination to live up to the topical subtitle, "The Father of Hate Radio." At various points throughout, Father Coughlin is credited with the invention of "televangelism" and politically-oriented "talk radio," and with having single-handedly "transformed radio broadcasting, and thereby public discourse, in American society" (pp. 2, 27, 28). These assertions in turn underwrite the implication, dramatic but undeveloped, that a direct line of historical descent stretches from Coughlin to the Moral Majority, the presidential bid of Pat Robertson, and some of the more sinister manifestations of the present-day Radical Right (pp. 3, 301).

Some historical perspective is required on both counts. First, Coughlin loses much of his Promethean stature when viewed against the larger historical context of early radio. No phase of broadcasting in the U.S. truly predates

broadcast evangelism. Churches were among the first American institutions to take up broadcasting, and even prior to the development of radio, sermons were being pounded out into the ether by spark telegraphy. Neither can any single person be said to have originated the broadcast of controversial political "talk." Before either Coughlin or Huey Long first stepped up to a microphone, the airwaves of the politically turbulent 1920's were crackling with the voices of populists, radicals, prophets and cranks. Some of these broadcasters remained merely local nuisances; others achieved significant power and even national stature. In the late 1920's the Reverend Robert P. Shuler, a scrappy Methodist minister with close links to the Ku Klux Klan, used his radio pulpit to weld the poor whites of Los Angeles into a loyal power base. In Kansas in 1930 a folksy medical charlatan named Dr. John Romulus Brinkley came within a hair's breadth of the governor's mansion thanks to his mastery of the microphone. Radio demagoguery did not begin with Father Coughlin; he simply worked on a grander scale than his predecessors, assisted by the Depression and by the new commercial network system which delivered him a truly national audience.

The related suggestion that Coughlin is somehow a founding figure of the present-day Radical Right is similarly inflated. If he can be fit into any conventional category, the New Deal Coughlin was, to use Warren's own words, "a leftist radical" (p. 79). The later Coughlin was one extremist leader among many, a latecomer to the teeming fringe-world described in Ralph Lord Roy's *Apostles of Discord: A Study of Organized Bigotry and Disruption at the Fringes* (1953), and Leo P. Ribuffo's *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (1983). Had this later Coughlin never existed, today's political landscape would hardly be different.

– CLIFF DOERKSEN
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Feminization of the Clergy in America: Occupational and Organizational Perspectives. By Paula D. Nesbitt. Oxford University Press, 1997, xi and 283 pages.

"We appear to be in the midst of a long-range social transformation," notes Paula Nesbitt at the conclusion of this study of women's entry into the official leadership of U.S. religious organizations (p. 177). In this century, the clergy profession has undergone, like other formerly male occupations, "feminiza-

tion”—a perceived decline in status, power, and prestige as women have entered in increasing numbers. To examine this phenomenon Nesbitt deploys the sociologist’s full arsenal with talent and precision. She makes some forays into sociohistorical analysis from a perspective both Weberian and feminist, but her major contribution is an analysis, more thorough than any yet attempted, of the role of women clergy in late twentieth-century religious organizations.

Nesbitt first sketches the remarkable rise in the numbers of clergy women across the denominational spectrum of the United States, from under seven hundred in 1910 to about fifty thousand in 1995 (pp. 23–5). She then sets out to treat three broad questions: how the gender composition of the clergy has changed and is changing; how such changes affect new clergy, both men and women; and how religious institutions are being transformed as a result. Her methodology is a longitudinal study of two denominations in the United States, using career biographies of a sample of male and female clergy from the Episcopal Church and the Unitarian-Universalist Association, in ordination cohorts from 1920 to 1990. Data from these samples are given a rigorous treatment and are presented by a battery of well-constructed tables and graphs. The scholarly apparatus includes useful appendices, full notes and bibliography, and an excellent index.

One could quibble with the population choice. Although there are distinct differences between the two denominations, their location in largely elite white North-eastern culture may limit the usefulness of her findings. To her credit, however, throughout the book there are cogent comparisons of her results with data from various denominations, African American, Asian American and overseas Christian communities, and Reform and Conservative Jewish congregations. This lends richness and nuance to Nesbitt’s study.

The first chapter provides an adequate, but in some respects disappointing, sociohistorical context. The book title signals a reliance on Ann Douglas’ classic work *The Feminization of American Culture* (1977) as an interpretive guide. While Nesbitt does provide some nuance to Douglas’ formulation, she engages only minimally with recent literature challenging Douglas’ claim of “feminization” as a broad cultural reality of American religious life. Other historical details also suggest the author has neglected contemporary historiography: her brief mention of the women’s missionary movement’s contribution refers to only one source, Page Smith’s 1970 publication, *Daughters of the Promised Land: Women in American History* (p. 17 and note). Far more detailed and complex accounts of this movement have been written in the

last quarter-century. Nesbitt's volume does not set out to be a definitive history of women's ordination in the United States, and it is far from that. In its sociological precision, however, it will prove an excellent source for such histories in the coming millennium.

To the non-specialist, sociological research often seems to be an exercise in proving the self-evident: "male and female clergy careers unfold in very different ways. Gender is a powerful corollary and predicator of career differences" (p. 71). "Well, duh," one is tempted to exclaim. Nevertheless, it is good to have the empirical evidence to substantiate commonsense observation, without having had to amass it oneself. Honest practitioners of the science of sociology like Nesbitt do admit that some important questions, the interpretive ones, "cannot be teased out of the statistical data" (p. 71).

Still, Nesbitt manages to tease out of her factoids and tables much that will be of interest to scholars in any theological discipline. Indeed, passages such as the analysis of various types of conservative backlash to women's ordination should be mandatory reading for all female seminarians, and for the men and women who are their teachers, supervisors or friends (pp. 107-14). The same is true for the chapter, "Decline and Fall of the Young Male Cleric," which finds—this time, *against* the "common sense observation"—that recent drops in the numbers of young men entering the clergy are "neatly parallel with" but *not* the result of the increasing female presence in the profession (p. 102). Her data does seem to show that young men's vocations were already declining in the 1930's-1950's, well before the largest influx of women (table 6.1, p. 100). This is useful information, and it is presented with as much clarity as statistics allow.

It would be unwise, however, to recommend this book to anyone likely to be mystified by sociological jargon. Sentences such as the following are not for the weak in spirit: "Event history analysis, utilizing maximum likelihood estimates based on Cox proportional hazard-rate modeling, evaluated time-dependent prospects for upward job mobility" (p. 36). This kind of language, happily kept to a minimum, is offset by some lively chapter headings and an occasional pithy or well-turned phrase: "few women make choices from a position completely free of male dependency", "the mixed blessings of tokenism", "women will continue to labor in the vineyard while the masters reap the fruit of their harvest" (pp. 128, 130, 164). Such conclusions are neither hastily drawn nor harshly expressed, but are presented as highly rational hypotheses borne out by empirical data.

Of course, a good statistician can jockey any data to her advantage, even if the famous *mot* about “lies, and damn lies, and statistics” is unfair. Nesbitt’s conclusions are valid, but beg to be applied to her own methodology. In the penultimate section, the author justly asserts that the nature and locus of authority are central for those who would revise gender roles or rectify injustice against women: any liberationist activity “must involve a radical analysis, rearticulation, and reappropriation of authority” (p. 170). May this apply also to the authority of sociological “facts,” statistical tables, and empirical “data”? Perhaps all feminists working in academia share what Nesbitt reveals as her own stance, a “hermeneutic of *intense ambivalence*” (Preface, p. vii). Must women use the tools of scholarship as they have been legitimated by a largely androcentric intellectual tradition? Or can they take apart those very tools, to rearticulate and reappropriate professional scholarship itself? These questions relate to Nesbitt’s visions of the possible transformative effect of women clergy on religious institutions in her refreshing “Concluding Unscientific Postscript” (pp. 173–77). As Nesbitt proposed in her introduction, indicating the direction of her research: “male concern over the possibility of losing authority . . . may be linked to the underlying structure of how male gender identity is constructed in our culture. But to more fully explore this thesis will take another book” (p. 8). This direction is welcome, and the book, on the evidence of this volume, is one to look out for.

– JENNIFER M. REECE

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Biblical Theology: Problems and Perspectives In Honor of J. Christiaan Beker. Edited by Steven J. Kraftchick, Charles D. Myers, and Ben C. Ollenburger. Abingdon Press, 1995, 336 pages.

Over the course of many decades biblical theology has demonstrated an ability to survive an occasional crisis through the evolution of its method, content, and purpose. This assortment of essays argues—implicitly in the sheer diversity of perspectives represented, explicitly in the editors’ introduction—that the discipline of biblical theology itself resists an easy definition. What it is, like how it should be done, is a matter open for debate. This ensemble of articles offers an introductory sampling of the wide range of interests that fall

under the rubric “Biblical Theology,” exhausting none of them and often exhibiting the many points of methodological dispute common to the field. The collection reflects a belief in the possibility of a viable theology of the Christian Bible and a recognition that every generation and culture will have to forge its own amidst discussions concerning the identity, scope, and expectations of such a thing.

As a *Festschrift* to J. Christiaan Beker, this volume reflects profound respect and gratitude for the Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament Theology Emeritus of Princeton Theological Seminary. Seventeen celebrated and qualified authors honor Dr. Beker with their scholarship and frequent efforts to relate their concerns to the legacy of his scholarship.

Part One, “The Bible and Theology in Church History,” contains two papers (Kathleen McVey on biblical interpretation and the articulation of a theology among second-century Greek apologists and Jean-Loup Seban on the footings laid for modern biblical criticism during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries) that accomplish a feat rare among today’s inquiries into biblical theology: acknowledgement that one can indeed speak of a complex and dynamic relationship between biblical interpretation and systematics existing prior to Gabler. A third essay by Steven J. Kraftchick highlights lessons learned from the impetuses of the Biblical Theology Movement and its dismantling at the hands of Barr, Gilkey, and Childs.

Ben C. Ollenburger’s essay in Part Two, “The Problems and Methods in Biblical Theology,” reviews some modern OT theologians to determine what a theological method *is* in the first place, suggests a number of components any such method should include, and advocates a wide variety of methodological expressions in order to open biblical theology to a larger conversation. Robert Morgan surveys some movements in recent NT theology, often emphasizing the place of a scholar’s own theory of revelation within his or her work. The reader finds ample evidence for Morgan’s own thoughts on this doctrine in his strong emphasis on canonical approaches. Concluding this section, J.J.M. Roberts defends historical-critical methods against a critique by George Lindbeck.

Part Three, “Proposals for Biblical Theology,” reflects the common impulse to elevate particular biblical themes as foci for a theology of the Bible. Bernhard W. Anderson explores covenant in the Hebrew Bible and identifies both continuity and discontinuity in the Christian rereading of these scriptures within the pages of the NT. Patrick D. Miller contends that theological themes often regarded as separate or in an indissoluble tension can be inte-

grated. He illustrates this with a study of creation and covenant in the OT. Walter Brueggemann investigates the Exile “as decisive for shaping OT faith” (p. 170), treats three exilic texts to illuminate what each says about how the Exile affects God and the perception of God, and offers exile and restoration as positive categories for understanding the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Kathleen M. O’Connor claims that Wisdom literature provides a valuable and even necessary corrective to traditional theologies of the OT, especially in light of strong challenges to these theologies from various contemporary global contexts.

The essays of three NT scholars in the third section all have obvious connections to Beker’s work, particularly his seminal *Paul the Apostle*. Hendrikus Boers proposes finding coherence in the NT not through theoretical propositions serving as centers, but by means of a “symbolic structure” (a term he borrows from Beker) that allows for contradictions and inconsistencies among the NT texts and, through the relationships between these texts as constituents of the canon, “provides for the wide range of expressions of the meaning of faith in Christ” (p. 208). Charles D. Myers and James H. Charlesworth both probe the impact of Jewish apocalyptic thought on the theology and literature of the NT. Myers focuses on the effects of the delay of the Parousia upon various NT books and concludes that “apocalyptic eschatological hope was crucial to the Christian faith and could not be ignored or glossed over without profoundly altering the very essence of the gospel” (p. 216). Charlesworth classifies five areas by which one may locate apocalyptic fingerprints upon the NT and prescribes some implications for contemporary theologians.

Finally, Part Four, “Biblical Theology and Theological Practice,” contains four essays addressing significant issues related to the activity of doing theology. George W. Stroup defends narrative theology against misgivings expressed by Beker in personal conversations. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld presents a lucid overview of various “feminist” contributions to biblical studies and includes several instructive anecdotes. Walter Wink draws upon his previous work on “the Powers” in the Bible and argues that a biblical social ethic should call for transforming inner as well as outer aspects of social structures, both the visible social system and its spiritual gestalt. Luke Timothy Johnson bemoans the problems posed by the literary diversity of the NT writings for the task of academic theology yet celebrates the ways this diversity participates in the “untidy conversations” of discernment undertaken by

communities committed to reading and interpreting the Bible as an authoritative “other” whose voices refuse distillation into a system or ideology.

Johnson labels theology produced in churches “untidy” because it is largely ignorant of the battles waged and ground rules instituted by the guild of biblical theologians. As a result, it is methodologically eclectic and ever changing, yet able to find success partially in its practitioners’ commitment to conversation. The diversity of the essays in this volume suggests that academic theology may be just as “untidy” an enterprise. Nevertheless, this dialogue with J. Christiaan Beker and among his colleagues also indicates that conversation might lead to integration, unity, creativity, and discovery in this sphere as well.

This collection offers a range of valuable contributions to biblical theology that will benefit most interested scholars. While most of the essays assume a modest background in the field, by the end of Part Two the neophyte will be well acquainted with many of the pivotal issues in the recent history of scholarship as well as the positions of von Rad, Eichrodt, and others. Although not extensive enough to serve as the primary text for a class, still this book delivers the promise of its subtitle: an engaging variety of *perspectives* that illustrate specific *problems* (in particular, the prospect of central theological concepts in a biblical theology), all wrestling with the conviction that the Bible, as a whole, has something to say to the church and to the world about God.

– MATTHEW L. SKINNER

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Cadences of Home: Preaching among Exiles. By Walter Brueggemann. Westminster John Knox Press, 1997, xi and 159 pages.

Students of the Bible have come to expect penetrating readings and pertinent applications from the pen of Walter Brueggemann, and they will not be disappointed with this recent work that deftly brings sacred text and postmodern culture into an engaging conversation. Brueggemann has clearly been thinking about these matters for some time, given the fact that five of the eight chapters of *Cadences of Home: Preaching among Exiles* were previously published as journal articles or independent essays (from 1989 to

1995). These are now combined with three new essays on the character and context of contemporary preaching.

As the subtitle indicates, the governing rubric is the metaphor of exile, one that Brueggemann believes appropriately describes the church's situation as it emerges out of the modern era in which it enjoyed the general approbation of society. This new setting offers both difficulties and possibilities to all those whose calling it is to proclaim the good news. Thus, in his own words, "this book represents a heavy-duty rethinking for myself of the art and act of preaching" (p. x). Obviously, *Cadences of Home* will have its greatest appeal among preachers, but it also offers to those in the academy fresh readings of numerous Old Testament texts in light of the church's task of proclamation in a postmodern world.

Characteristic of Brueggemann's other works on, for example, the Bible's poetic or prophetic literature, this book moves easily from exegesis of texts to exposition of their message. Although the central assumption—that "the Old Testament experience of and reflection upon exile is a helpful *metaphor* for understanding our current faith situation in the U. S. Church, and a *model* for pondering new forms of ecclesiology" (p. 1)—may be open to debate (see below), even the skeptic will appreciate the way Brueggemann brings his interpretive expertise to bear upon a whole range of texts. For example, he eloquently describes the hope that the herald offers in Second Isaiah: "The exile was widely seen to be a season of God's absence, and now this poet dares to assert that God is present in that very circumstance, faithfully at work to bring a newness out of the defeat" (p. 19).

An important issue arises in Brueggemann's reading of differing perspectives on exile: "As white, male, Western privilege comes to an end, some are likely to experience that 'ending' as terrible loss that evokes fear and resentment. Evangelical faith, however, dares to identify what is (for some) an alienating circumstance as the matrix for God's newness (for all)" (p. 23). In order to address adequately this context out of the biblical materials, one of the previously written essays, "Preaching as Reimagination" (ch. 3) presents sixteen theses that should be read closely with the exploration of texts in chapter four, a new essay entitled "Testimony as a Decentered Mode of Preaching."

Another new essay, "Rhetoric and Community" (ch. 5), seeks to forge an alliance between the hermeneutical theory of Paul Ricoeur and the rhetorical-critical method of James Muilenberg. In this regard, Brueggemann's sympathies lie with models of biblical criticism that are not exclusively his-

torical-critical. In four brief studies (Genesis 27; 2 Kings 6; Isaiah 45; and 2 Samuel 12), he then explores what Ricoeur calls “the world in the text” with sensitivity to the rhetorical artistry of these passages. Armed with these interpretive tools, the preacher addresses the church directly, while the academy and society “overhear the good news” (ch. 6). Scholars will recognize in the extended discussion of David Tracy and George Lindbeck (pp. 149–151, n. 4) that Brueggemann is too careful a commentator on the contemporary scene to posit a sharp dichotomy between the church and society. While “the church itself is the primary addressee in this [theological] discourse, so that the canons of credibility operative in the church are the decisive ones” (p. 79), the “exilic” situation is nevertheless marked by a church “intensely aware of the hegemonic community with which it lives in tension” (p. 53). The concluding chapters on “Rethinking Church through Scripture” (ch. 7) and “Disciplines of Readiness” (ch. 8) round out the discussion with an eye for future ecclesial directions.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the work will not be the readings of specific biblical texts but rather the adequacy of “exile” as a general metaphor describing the contemporary ecclesial and homiletical situation. The disclaimer in the second paragraph of the preface seems to be aimed at deflecting any strong criticism of his use of the metaphor, since, in spite of its limitations, Brueggemann claims that “the metaphor can be generative and energizing for our common work” (p. ix). Even so, this reviewer would suggest a careful examination of the assumptions involved in the naming of “our” situation as “exilic.” Brueggemann’s own use of a variety of texts implies that “exile” must be held in conversation with other notions—salvation, law, worship, and wisdom—that provide testimonies in a larger biblical theology, as he himself has so cogently argued in his recent magnum opus, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Fortress, 1997). To provide but one example, a problematic area in *Cadences of Home* remains the general denigration of the “core model” of kingship and the testimony of royal theology. There could have been more nuance in the declaration that “God resisted the temple in any case” (p. 109), insofar as the larger context of 2 Sam 7:4–7, which Brueggemann cites, seems to reveal conflicting ideologies at work.

As communities of faith grapple with the texts and metaphor of exile, they should ask themselves about the identity of postmodern exiles and the communities from which they are estranged. The numerous references to “white, male, European” hegemony clarify Brueggemann’s audience, but there are surely other settings and exiles that may be addressed. An indica-

tion of Brueggemann's own social and ecclesial situation surfaces in "Disciplines of Readiness" (ch. 8), which was adapted from an "occasional paper" for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). To make this essay appeal to a wider audience, *Cadences of Home* has in most cases changed the term "Presbyterian" to "Christian." This adaptation raises the question of how a mainline Protestant situation may or may not be descriptive of Christianity—even if only in the U.S.—as a whole.

In spite of these reservations, it is Brueggemann's posing of the issue in the first place that makes *Cadences of Home* a valuable resource for the church and the academy. Although the use of several previously published essays leads to numerous repetitions of the character of the problem, the overall effect is to present several facets of the precious, scriptural gem of "exile," reflected through the eloquence, power, and passion of Brueggemann's exposition.

— JAMES K. MEAD

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Missionary Movement in American Catholic History. By Angelyn Dries, O.S.F. Orbis Books, 1998, xviii and 398 pages.

In 1991 Gerald Anderson wrote that a "comprehensive history of Catholic missionary outreach from the United States has not yet been written" ("Mission Research, Writing and Publishing: 1971–1991," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 15/4, [Oct. 1991]: 169). Finally such a book has appeared this year written by Professor Angelyn Dries of Cardinal Stritch College. Examining the rich mines of published and archival sources, Dries presents information in a readable narrative and encourages scholars' "further use of archives in this under-researched field" (p. 3) of American Catholic mission studies.

Dries depicts the "missionary movement of the United States Catholic Church, 1841–1980" (p. 1) as a cohesive movement which developed in stages. In the Introduction Dries poses four analytical questions which guide her search for certain elements in the movement's development. In Chapter 10 she summarizes these "themes and threads" (p. 247): factors promoting mission (wars, politics, economics, papal encyclicals, Protestant challenges); formation (mission education); gender (roles of priests, brothers, women mis-

sionaries); and theological shifts. Such political events as the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, and the Cuban Missile Crisis encouraged American Catholic participation in mission fields, where they replaced their European predecessors. Among these four elements Dries cites theological shifts as the most important. Until the 1960s the dominant understanding of mission was church planting in alien lands and among alien peoples (missions). But American political involvement in Latin America after 1959 changed the concept of mission into "development" (ch. 8). Simultaneously the theology of "liberation" (p. 219) was emerging. The language of mission changed correspondingly, first from that of charity to market-enterprise and then to identifying with "the poor" (ch. 9). The focus of mission shifted from saving souls of pagan/mystical Asians (1898–1953) to reclaiming Catholics of Latin America (1959–71) to finding Africans (1946–present). As a result of these theological shifts, by the 1980s the American Catholics understood themselves as part of "a world Church" (p. 269).

Dries is a well established specialist in the Progressive Era of American history. Hence her analysis is most insightful during this period. She is well informed of recent historical and missiological studies on the heyday of American Protestant foreign mission. Dries sees many common themes between American Catholics and Protestants. Popular social Darwinism prevailed, with America on top of the scale of human development while heathens groped in darkness. They were thought to be oppressed by satanic pagan religions, calling out to American missionaries to uplift them. Inspired by the numerous Protestant mission publications, Catholics published journals such as *Catholic Missions*, *The Field Afar*, and *The Far East*. They depicted heroic American missionaries: democratic, freedom loving, adaptable, individualistic and enthusiastic. Although Dries does not explicitly say so, she seems to imply that while Catholic missionaries were thoroughly influenced by American beliefs of racial superiority, they differed somewhat theologically from their Protestant counterparts. Catholics were trained in the tradition of neo-Thomism of the Council of Trent. They affirmed the basic goodness in human nature, giving them a positive outlook on humanity and hope for conversion.

American Catholic missionaries came from diverse groups: men's religious congregations, women's congregations, diocesan priests and lay mission societies. They were Jesuits, Maryknollers, Maryknoll Sisters, Franciscans, Redemptorists, Divine Word Missionaries, Medical Mission Sisters, Sisters of Mercy, Marianists, Columban Fathers, workers from the

Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood, priests sent by the Bishop of New York and many more. While numerous mission circles sprang up among Catholics and Protestants, both sought to centralize mission funds; however, sending organizations such as the National Office of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (SPF), Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll) and American Board of Catholic Missions (ABCM) did not necessarily function as designed by ecclesiastical leadership. Catholic and Protestant women responded to missions through giving. Although Catholic women missionaries never became a majority as among Protestants, they were essential in the carrying out of the daily tasks of mission. While male missionaries were busy building up the institutional church, women missionaries touched the lives of the local people more directly. Both Protestant and Catholic women missionaries engaged in “woman’s work for woman.” Both were equally conditioned by the Victorian sphere theory that promoted the home as the place of women.

Lay women not only collected funds for the orders and diocesan missionaries, but also took initiative in sending lay missionaries. Like Protestants, Catholics became increasingly aware of the importance of lay mission work. During this period a very influential group, Catholic Students Mission Crusade (CSMC), was established. The emphasis on mission as a vocation for all Christians was further encouraged by papal encyclicals, Papal Volunteers for Latin America (PAVLA) and the Grail (a well-known Catholic international women’s organization for lay women’s leadership). This emphasis was later included as an official theme in Vatican II documents.

Another interesting similarity between Protestants and Catholics of this period was the Modernist controversy. Dries points to the “missionary” (p. 83) aspect of the Modernist/Americanist controversy surrounding the Dunwoodie Circle in the early 20th century; adaptation had always been a fact of missionary life. This insight fills a gap in earlier studies of that controversy. Dries shows that while Modernism and Americanism were officially condemned, the missionary impulse of the American Catholic Church only increased. From Dries’ analysis I sense that the American Catholic missionary movement may not have suffered as did the Protestant’s from the bitter fighting between fundamentalists and liberals. I wonder if this has something to do with the long-standing Catholic catechetical tradition in seeing equal value in the *seven spiritual* as well as the *physical acts of mercy*. The Catholic Church may never have felt a need to make a sharp dichotomy between evangelization and social work as did the Protestants. I was also im-

pressed by the resources of symbols that the Catholics could draw from in their history (early church martyrs, medieval crusaders, as well as various saints) for their models for mission.

Dries successfully shows that the Progressive Era provided fertile ground for the blossoming of the American Catholic mission movement from 1946–68. As the spirit of the age diminished, the uniquely American identity also was transformed into a global and Catholic one. So what were the specific American contributions? I am not yet able to clarify Dries' answers. Throughout this book Dries mentions the papal encyclicals influential in transforming mission theology. Further explanation of these may give light to the specifically Catholic development of the missionary movement. (One of the useful features of this book is the list of abbreviations for archives and congregations.) Ecumenists may be interested in knowing more about the change in Catholic attitudes toward Protestant threats. Why and how did counter-Reformation-like territorial antagonisms soften into a cooperative spirit? Finally I noticed Dries' awareness of Mateo Ricci as "American missionaries' spiritual predecessor in China" (p. 130). Perhaps in her future work Dries, as a Franciscan and thus a spiritual descendant of the fierce critics of the 16th century Jesuits, can enlighten historians in finding the thread of continuity between the theories of accommodation of the 16th century and the 19th century Catholic missionary movement.

– HARUKO NAWATA WARD

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice. By Dana L. Robert. Mercer University Press, 1996, xxii and 444 pages.

Dana L. Robert intends to fill in gaps that distort the historical record of American mission theory with her book *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice*. This book offers a survey of some important women's mission theory during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although most mission theory has been traced through male-formulated theological treatises and debates of denominational executives, Robert claims that women also participated in the creation of a distinctively American mission theory. Using sources such as missionary letters and journals, periodical literature and biographies, an ecumenical series of books pub-

lished primarily by women for other women, interviews, and other assorted archival materials, she identifies certain gender-based concerns that have shaped the mission theories of women.

Although dominant American mission theory contrasts the goals of evangelization and civilization, Robert shows how women's mission theory blurred those lines of distinction in early nineteenth century Protestantism, in turn of the century evangelical and ecumenical circles, and among Roman Catholic women. Working within their social context and through roles open to them, women's mission has been holistic by addressing both physical and spiritual needs.

The basic organization of the book is chronological. It begins by examining the "Missionary Wife" and "Missionary Teacher" from 1812 to 1860. Rooted in experiences of religious activism and conversion that formed the Second Great Awakening, women spoke of a desire for usefulness and self-sacrifice as motivations for participation in mission. Marriage to a male missionary provided the primary avenue for fulfilling this calling. Ann Hasseltine Judson and Baptist missionaries in Burma along with the first group of missionaries from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to Hawaii (the Sandwich Islands) form two case studies in which women's mission theory navigates the relationship between modeling a "Christian home" and direct evangelism. In the mid-nineteenth century as mission boards also began to send single women missionaries, teaching became the primary role open to them. In a missionary ideological struggle between education as the key to gaining access to indigenous populations and preparing their minds for the gospel and Rufus Anderson's more evangelistic theory of planting self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating churches, women interpreted their teaching roles as preaching.

Independent evangelical missions and the ecumenical women's missionary movement from 1860 to the Second World War constitute the book's second section. Robert goes into detail about the theory of "Woman's Work for Woman" that formed the theoretical basis for mainline Protestant work. Based on nineteenth century understandings of separate spheres of influence for men and women, and a view of women as vital for the conversion of their families and societies, the movement valued women missionaries for their work with women and children. The ecumenical women's movement reached its peak with the 1910 Jubilee celebration of women's missionary boards. It emphasized that women in other cultures were downtrodden but could receive blessings such as the American women experienced if they ac-

cepted Christianity. Robert uses the Woman's Foreign Mission Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church as a case study to illustrate how women interpreted their roles in teaching and medical work as means of social uplift. Social realities of women missionaries and the implications of "Woman's Work for Woman" fostered a cooperation with indigenous women that led to the theory of "World Friendship" which encouraged partnership between Christians all over the globe.

This book also addresses the theories of women in Protestant evangelical faith missions, those influenced by the holiness movement, and Pentecostal Christians. Although these missions focused on preaching rather than teaching, women found teaching and marriage the primary roles open to them. While espousing a theory of direct evangelism, the social realities of these missionaries found them reenacting mission theories closer to the "Christian home" and "education as evangelism" theories of the early nineteenth century.

In the book's final section Robert addresses Roman Catholic women in mission using the Maryknoll Sisters as a case study. Robert notes many similarities between the women's mission theory of Catholics and Protestants. Changing interpretations of Mary illustrate the changing mission theories of the Maryknoll Sisters. The turn of the century emphasis on Mary as one who gave birth to the church and acted as guardian of the home made women auxiliaries to the priests and necessitated their work with women and children, so that Christian families could be formed, an indigenous priesthood created, and the institutional church strengthened. In the 1970s and 1980s the Maryknoll Sisters concentrated on Mary as a poor peasant girl who served by suffering with her son who was hunted as a baby and later executed by the government. This theory coincided with pronouncements of the Second Vatican Council and underlay the missionaries' work of evangelism defined as prophecy and living among the poor as well as their interpretation of teaching as conscientization.

Dana Robert's book is an excellent addition to the field of mission theory. In a well researched and thoroughly documented fashion, she adds a new dimension to mission theory that gets past the descriptive dichotomy of evangelism versus civilization and illustrates the holism present in the actual practice of much work during the modern missionary movement. Although she tries to be comprehensive, the sections on Protestant evangelical faith missions and Roman Catholic orders are clearly weaker than those dealing with the ecumenical women's missionary movement. In chapter seven Rob-

ert herself admits that a lack of resource material and her own Protestant identity enter into this deficiency. In providing a survey of women's mission theory and in setting a precedent for placing mission theory in its social context, this weakness might be interpreted simply as a call for others within those traditions to continue the task she has begun. The strength of this book are the footnotes and bibliography that provide clear signposts for those just beginning to study mission theory as well as wonderful resources for those wishing to engage in further research. An index would have been a welcome addition to this work.

— MARY SCHALLER BLAUFUSS
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Families in Ancient Israel. Edited by Leo Perdue. The Family, Religion, and Culture Series. D. Browning and I. Evison, series editors. Westminster John Knox Press, 1997, 285 pages.

This work contains five essays by four well-known Old Testament scholars. Overall, the book is a wealth of information and is adaptable for a wide variety of academic uses. The three main essays provide comprehensive information on family life in the pre-monarchial, first temple, and second temple periods. In addition, each of the five articles is extensively documented and will provide a basis of research in specific aspects of familial life. In the fourth essay, Leo Perdue summarizes the works in the three previous chapters and provides a chapter that will lend itself well to course assignments in both the college and seminary setting.

The limits of the book are in the scantness of exact information on family life in all three periods. Because of this situation, while well written and researched by talented scholars, much of the information remains speculative or reconstructed from surrounding cultures and sociological studies. Nevertheless, the essays outline all that is currently known about family life in the biblical period.

The first essay by Carol Meyers is a review of life in pre-monarchial highland villages. The work is a summary and update of her well-known *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*. She reviews and summarizes archaeological evidence of everyday life in the highland villages, then turns

to the social structures of families, and moves finally to describing interactions between larger groups of families. She also provides a discussion of religious practice in these early homes and villages.

In the second essay, Joseph Blenkinsopp describes the family during the first temple period. His treatment is comprehensive, exploring not only family structure, but the social position of its individual members, as well as offering a full treatment of marriage and divorce. The benefit of this chapter is that its central focus is on rural family life, instead of the royal circles. While the essay is well done, it does contain a few troublesome generalizations that many scholars would challenge, such as a comparison between Israel and “its more permissive neighbors” (p. 75), a comparison that requires more evidence to be understood. He also writes that goddess worship is “especially popular with women” (p. 82), ignoring goddess worship’s central role in agriculture, again in what seems to be an oversimplification.

Both Meyers and Blenkinsopp also have a definite anti-monarchial focus in their presentations. Both write extensively concerning the detriments of the monarchy to the family unit; yet neither balance their criticism with a discussion of the benefits of a centralized state such as an increased ability to sell goods in foreign markets or the increased agricultural production in a country protected by a national army.

In the third essay, John Collins studies the second temple period. His essay is more focused than the others, honing in on issues concerning marriage and divorce. He gives a comprehensive review of issues surrounding marriage, polygamy and celibacy, as well as the financial arrangements of marriage contracts.

Leo Perdue writes the last two essays. The first, referred to above, is a summary of the three previous essays, providing a comprehensive presentation of current scholarship on family practices in ancient Israel. The second essay is titled “The Household, Old Testament Theology and Contemporary Hermeneutics.” This article first focuses on the myriad of familial relationships portrayed in the OT and how these relationships represent theological paradigms. Second, Perdue suggests a method for critical evaluation of the family in ancient Israel and its application to contemporary culture. He warns that a clear and critical hermeneutic is essential since there are major differences between the patterns of family life in ancient Israel and in the present. He suggests using a covenant process as a basis of theological reflection on families then and now.

Overall, this work is an important addition to the library of both scholars and those interested in developing a biblical understanding of family systems.

— BETH LANEEL TANNER

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Pragmatic Theology: Negotiating the Intersections of an American Philosophy of Religion and Public Theology. By Victor Anderson. State University of New York Press, 1998, 172 pages.

Victor Anderson wrote his 1992 Princeton University dissertation entitled *The Legacy of Pragmatism in the Theologies of Macintosh, Niebuhr, and Gustafson*. *Pragmatic Theology* builds upon that earlier work and subsequent unpublished lectures in a new and stimulating monograph. This publication marks a significant step in Anderson's larger "work in progress" addressing: a) the marginalization of academic theology by secular philosophy on the one hand and the traditionalist Church on the other; and hence, b) the problematic of a public theology versus one that is merely privatized or communitarian.

Readers of his first book, *Beyond Ontological Blackness* (New York: Continuum, 1995), will see the integrity of the two works despite clearly differentiated purposes. The earlier publication disturbed some reviewers for its (intentionally) unspecified religious or theological grounding. Anderson unarguably comes clean on that point in *Pragmatic Theology*, while having made the point otherwise that incisive cultural criticism need not be the prerogative of any one field including that of religionists, much less that of any particular theological camp. Rather, multiple and diverse perspectives, theological or otherwise, might coalesce on the worthy pursuit of maximal human flourishing, making use of the "regulative ideals" or commensurable moral languages of "cultural fulfillment and transcendence." The author's consistent claim is that while such languages "are necessarily moral, they are not necessarily theological" (p. 2).

Cultural fulfillment and transcendence, "the ends and goods which contribute most generally to human flourishing," become regulative ideals in the "pragmatic theology" espoused here. In a successful effort to demonstrate that his chosen descriptor is not an oxymoron, Anderson draws upon

both American philosophical pragmatism (Pierce, James, Dewey, Mead, Joyce) and theological appropriations of it by “the Chicago School” (Mathews, Smith, Foster, Ames) and subsequent critical religious realists (especially D. C. Macintosh). These distinct American traditions are uniquely conjoined for this purpose; although Anderson names several other contemporary philosophers of religion as collaborators in his overall project (e.g., Jerome Stone, Nancy Frankenberry, Robert Corrington, and Linell Cady).

The resultant theological reconstruction is one arguing for a divine reality encountered in human experiences of the world. It accentuates finitude and fallibility as well as creativity and hope for melioration of the human condition. Eschewing classical theology or any uncritical supernaturalism legitimately unseated by secularization, Anderson’s public theology works instead with that which is given us in a “pragmatic naturalism.” Affinities are noted in this regard with theologians James Gustafson and Gordon Kaufmann.

In his Foreword, series editor William Dean states the intent of breaching “barriers that separate intellectuals and the broader public”—and his expectation that this inaugural volume of the Religion and American Public Life series will succeed in extending efforts to do so (p. xi). Readers who interpret this as promising the latest “pop theology” will be disappointed of course. Those who know Victor Anderson’s work also know better than to expect anything less than the epitome of academic rigor. For “the broader public,” I expect *Pragmatic Theology* will be a challenging read. Difficulties of nomenclature and referents are mitigated somewhat by an extensive critical bibliography. For instance, claims regarding the influences of classical pragmatism on H. Richard Niebuhr and his relational value theory find further and helpful elaboration in this appended section.

If barriers are indeed breached, it may be such as have existed oftentimes between academic theology and other disciplines, especially philosophy, social theory, literary and cultural criticism. It is not yet the bridge that will link intellectuals with the broader public and not yet (if ever) a popular public theology, but I think it could constitute the legitimate theological footings upon which such a structure might ultimately be built—or rebuilt.

In particular, Anderson has delivered an impressive response to the catch-22 dilemma posed a decade earlier by his Princeton teacher, Jeffrey Stout. The latter’s well-received *Ethics After Babel* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988) both exhorted academic theologians to “say something theological” and simultaneously silenced or at least sidelined them in the arena of public relevance. As the former-student-now-critic sees it, “Stout insists that a theological ar-

gument that has nothing theological to say in content or that speaks in a voice that is not recognizably theological places the public relevance of theology at risk. However, he also limits theology's voice to the classical function of transmitting sacred doctrine and a content that is predicated on divine revelation" (pp. 124–5); and such a theology is said by Stout to be "incommensurable with the content and functions of secular discourse" (p. 96). But the dilemma created for a public theology is a false one when contemporary theology is construed differently, pragmatically, and in light of a minor historical tradition rooted both philosophically and theologically if not very much confessionally.

Anderson the philosopher takes pains to define his terms, often eloquently. For example: public theology "is the use of theological concepts and symbols to connect the spirituality of religious communicants to their moral, public obligations as democratic citizens" (p. 111). I find that he is less attentive to exemplification, to providing concrete examples of the practical difference his theology makes in the real world. This paucity seems a bit ironic for a *pragmatic* public theology; and though the author recognizes the problem, he does not rectify it sufficiently in my opinion. The reader is left only with a tantalizing admission: "I admit that the conceptual path that I have taken may appear to some as abstract and detached from the genuine public issues and problems which ought to concern American public theology. I also think that the adequacy of religious interpretations ought to be tested by their concrete relations to the public problems that characterize our public life" (p. 127).

To say that a book is intellectually rigorous, as this one certainly is, is not to say that it lacks passion. The passion inspiring Victor Anderson's latest creation is hinted at in the dedicatory page: "to the millions who have died from AIDS and in memory of my brother..." While *Pragmatic Theology* is grounded in realist fallibilism and radical empiricism, it is also about utopian ideals and radical faith: "I write this book in faith that another generation will experience transcendence from the devastating powers of AIDS over human fulfillment."

As to a more broadly accessible and concretely exemplified sequel somewhere in the future of Andersonian pragmatic theology? This too is something to be eagerly anticipated by a growing body of appreciative readers, myself among them.

— TARRIS D. ROSELL

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

A Companion to Philosophy of Religion. Edited by Philip L. Quinn and Charles Taliaferro. Blackwell, 1997, 639 pages.

There are books which so powerfully present their case that it is impossible for the reader to neglect them, regardless of his or her position. A review of such a book would discuss the contents, while the formal matters would only be hinted at. The more established the issues discussed in the book, the more weight would be given to the formal factors, like presentation, language, and the use of other literature.

In that case, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference books would be treated primarily from a formal point of view. However, this position suggests that only established and agreed upon positions would be presented.

The new edition of the multivolume Blackwell's Companions to Philosophy series challenges this understanding. It both succinctly and comprehensively presents information about traditional subjects as well as the new and developing positions that are live in contemporary discussions.

The project is impressive. It attempts to present "a comprehensive and authoritative survey of philosophy as a whole." For several years already, a steady stream of thick volumes has flowed from Blackwell's presses to bookstores, each addressing a particular area in philosophy. The comprehensive nature of the series is seen by looking at the titles of different volumes. Traditional divisions in philosophy are represented as well as newly recognized fields. In addition to a volume on Metaphysics and Ethics, there is a special volume covering Feminist philosophy. There is a volume focused on Aesthetics, one on Epistemology, and yet another one on Philosophy of Mind. Philosophy of Language has its own volume as well as Philosophy of Law and Legal Theory and even Contemporary Political Philosophy. The early volumes are entitled "Blackwell's Companions to..." but the later ones drop "Blackwell's" for an indefinite article. Such a change might make the catalogue searches a little more difficult, but it suggests that Blackwell has started a series that will outgrow the name of its publisher in its impact.

What one can see from this partial list of volume titles is in microcosm represented in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. The traditional divisions within the discipline of Philosophy of Religion are carefully considered and presented. Yet this does not restrict different approaches that do not necessarily fit into those divisions. The result is a wide collection of essays (or volumes if we consider the whole series) that offers not only guidance in standard issues, but invites the reader to go in new and exciting directions.

To be able to do so, editors of *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, Philip L. Quinn and Charles Taliaferro, invited contributions from very different authors. Because Blackwell's Companions are not dictionaries or encyclopedias in the usual sense, but consist of essays longer than common encyclopedia entries, the presentation of an issue can be more comprehensive, allowing the authors to present their case in a fashion that goes beyond the usual dry language of standard dictionaries of philosophy.

The most remarkable feature of this particular volume is the choice of authors for the individual articles. Again, unlike in standard dictionaries and encyclopedias, where the authors tend to fade into background, in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion* the choice of authors is a decisive feature of the volume. Just a brief glance over the contents pages reads like a "who's who" in philosophical theology. Nearly every subject is taken up and presented by the most respected specialist in a given area. D. R. Griffin writes on process theology, Janet Soskice on the nature of religious language, Roger Trigg on theological realism and antirealism, Alvin Plantinga on reformed epistemology, and John Hick on religions plularism, to name just few examples. The ability of editors to solicit articles from the right scholars has made this volume an extraordinary piece of reference literature. In allowing the real experts to present the topic in question, the editors give the reader not only a decent overview of the issues, but also a passionate exposition of leading interpretation as well.

I believe that it is this feature that sets this volume apart from other reference works. It brings much more than a detached recapitulation of the main positions and arguments involved. Individual issues are argued for and defended as if the articles were not part of a reference work but a scholarly journal or book. Such a presentation is not only bound to attract attention, but will also challenge the reader to take a position for himself or herself on any given issue.

A Companion to Philosophy of Religion, as any other reference work, is intended for nonspecialists. Experts will feel that not enough space was taken to deal with all possible aspects of a particular issue. However, the passionate exposition of many authors ensures that those who are not experts themselves will be willing to go and explore the issues more deeply. Bibliographies at the end of every article should be helpful in further exploration, but are too short and in some cases even outdated. Their brevity and incompleteness contrasts with life and passion in the exposition of the issues.

The best feature of the volume—enthusiastic presentation of new issues in the scholarly debate—ironically reveals the weakness of the volume as well. A set of articles about traditional doctrines is generally presented less enthusiastically in comparison to articles concerning newly emerging themes, lacking the brilliance and challenging freshness of articles arguing issues on the cutting edge of contemporary philosophy of religion. For example, *Petitionary Prayer* by Eleonore Stump is just a heap of paragraphs each consisting of description of the philosophical difficulty of petitionary prayer and an assurance that it is not quite an unsolvable problem after all (pp. 577–83). The reader does not get a sense that Stump really cares one way or another, as she only performs remarkable philosophical somersaults to keep the traditional understanding alive. Other solutions, like process understanding of God's activity in the world, that depart from the tradition but provide a very coherent answer to most of the difficulties mentioned in the article are not mentioned at all. Notoriously difficult issues like divine omniscience are presented ambiguously, trying both to assert the doctrines as part of Christian reflection on faith and to leave room for those who do not hold them any more or who are challenging their status. Defense of these doctrines tends to be rather technical, and not thoroughly argued (pp. 237–39). Christian convictions are often put aside and the argument is carried on in a technical fashion which leads to a logically possible solution, but certainly one which is not probable and consequently not convincing. To argue for mere possibility rather than plausibility might be good enough in a nonchristian setting, but for philosophical theology it is not sufficient.

There is no question that the Blackwell's Companions will become standard reference sources for years to come, and *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion* is a part of it that certainly should not be overlooked.

– TOMÁŠ HANČIL

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CONTRIBUTORS

THOMAS JAY OORD is a fourth year Ph.D. student in the religion department at Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, California. He is specializing in Philosophy of Religion and Theology and is currently writing a dissertation on "A Theology of Love." He is particularly interested in process-based constructive postmodernism and plans to pursue a career in religious scholarship.

SHANE KIRKPATRICK is pursuing the Ph.D. degree through the theology department of the University of Notre Dame. He is specializing in Hebrew Bible and is particularly interested in the formation of the Bible as well as its use in theology.

J. M. GIVENS, JR. is a Ph.D. candidate in the department of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he serves as a teaching fellow in systematic theology. His research interests include Baptist theology, contextual theologies, theology of religions, and Sophia Christology. His dissertation is on the theme of Christ as hermeneutical referent for the doctrine of God.

GRACE JI-SUN KIM is a third year Ph.D. student at Knox College, Toronto School of Theology. She is writing her dissertation on Korean North American women's christology.

ALEX HAWKINS is a fourth year Ph.D. student in the religion department at Duke University. He is specializing in theology and ethics. His dissertation focuses on conceptualizations of history and the writing of history within modern theology.

Call For Papers

Koinonia is seeking papers which explore emerging areas of interest in the study of religion and which are likely to foster interdisciplinary dialogue. We invite graduate students currently enrolled in accredited programs in religious and theological studies to submit their work to be considered for publication. Submissions are reviewed by an editorial board comprised of doctoral students who are specializing in different areas of theological and religious studies. *Koinonia* is published semi-annually.

Spring issue

The spring issue is an open issue which contains four or five essays. Papers on all topics will be considered for publication and submissions for the spring issue are welcomed throughout the year.

Deadline for each spring issue is January 1.

Fall issue

Each fall, usually in October, the editorial Board of *Koinonia* hosts a forum at Princeton Theological Seminary. The editors select a central essay for the annual forum on the basis of the essay's relevance for doctoral students in the study of religion and its potential for interdisciplinary dialogue. Both the central essay and several responses are presented at the forum and subsequently published in the fall issue of the journal. The cost of attendance at the forum is defrayed for the author of the central paper and for the respondents.

Deadline for papers to be considered for the fall forum is April 15.

Full manuscripts are required. Abstracts must also be presented for those papers being considered for the fall forum. Manuscripts should be presented in both hard copy and on diskette, though it is also possible to send submissions via e-mail. A style sheet is available on request.

Each issue of *Koinonia* also carries about a dozen critical reviews of important, recently published books in religious studies. Unsolicited reviews are welcomed and should be approximately one thousand words in length. Students interested in reviewing books for *Koinonia* are invited to contact the executive editor.

Correspondence and submissions should be addressed to:

Koinonia Journal
Princeton Theological Seminary
P.O. Box 821
Princeton, NJ 08542-0803

Karla Ann Koll
Executive Editor karla.koll@ptsem.edu
Tomáš Hančil
Production Editor tomas.hancil@ptsem.edu

Electronic version: <http://www.ptsem.edu/read/koinonia/>

Annual subscription	\$18.00
Student price	\$12.00
Institution price	\$24.00

Typography: Tomáš Hančil

